
Rethinking the American Jewish Experience

Boston's African-Americans and American Jews: Two Views

William Toll and Marshall F. Stevenson, Jr.

Levine, Hillel, and Lawrence Harmon. *The Death of an American Jewish Community: A Tragedy of Good Intentions*.
New York: Free Press, 1992.

In *The Death of an American Jewish Community*, a study of neighborhood transition in Boston in the 1960s and early 1970s, Hillel Levine and Lawrence Harmon seek to reexamine the cause of the deterioration of relations between blacks and Jews. Most students, the authors believe, have focused on the group stereotypes, individual prejudices, and acrimonious fears that have turned Jews and blacks against each other. But if we examine residential patterns rather than off-hand expressions of opinion, the authors argue, we will see how institutions outside the African-American and Jewish communities have exploited both. As Jewish neighborhoods were transformed into black ones, banks and government agencies deliberately manipulated both groups. The banks earned large profits, while government bureaucrats carried out what they considered enlightened public policy. Whatever the personal motives, these "structural forces" created hostility between African-Americans and Jews, who had in the past had a common interest in social justice.

To illustrate this thesis, the authors examine three large Boston districts, Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan, between 1950 and 1973. The area held about 90,000 Jews in 1950, but only about 2,500 in the early 1970s, as blacks became the overwhelming majority. All of the feared consequences followed. Street crime became endemic, the schools deteriorated as behavioral problems overwhelmed academic learning, and city services were dramatically curtailed. In the past journalists and others have attributed this

social collapse to Jewish fears of black street crime and lowering property values, and to black resentment against Jewish landlords, storekeepers, as well as teachers. But how African-Americans chose to locate in predominantly Jewish neighborhoods in the first place has gone unexamined. The authors see it as the key that unlocks the mystery of neighborhood transition. Indeed, it also masks the "dirty little secret" of class discrimination and the politics of interethnic contacts.

African-Americans, who settled as renters in deteriorating Roxbury by the 1950s, finally had the prospect of becoming homeowners in nearby Dorchester and Mattapan in the late 1960s. The aegis of federally subsidized "urban renewal" provided the incentive for Boston's mayors John Collins and Kevin White in the 1960s to plan commercial and residential redevelopment through a Boston Redevelopment Authority. The displacement of many of Boston's blacks meant that housing would have to be found for many of them. This led the mayors to organize a consortium of savings banks to form a Boston Banks Urban Renewal Group (B-BURG), which in turn gained FHA insurance for money to be lent to low-income, predominantly African-American buyers seeking homes. But keeping within FHA guidelines, the banks would only lend money within restricted zones. Working-class Irish and Italian neighborhoods were off-limits to potential borrowers, while a zone comprising Dorchester and Mattapan, known to be lower-income Jewish neighborhoods, was "red-lined" to receive loans. Jews residing in these areas had paid off their mortgages, so the banks had little business there. By lending to African-Americans, the banks would open a region for their own profits, and the FHA guaranteed that the banks would be paid off should the borrowers default. This policy would also mean that the Irish politicians who dominated Boston's government and the Boston Redevelopment Authority would not be challenged by working-class Irish or Italians who resented and resisted black relocation in their neighborhoods. Between 1968 and 1970, realtors bombarded Jewish residents of Dorchester and Mattapan with tales of falling property values to reinforce their fears of black street crime. Rapidly, older Jewish families found reasons to sell to speculators,

who in turn resold the houses at inflated rates to African-American buyers whose mortgages were insured by the FHA. A Jewish community disintegrated, and a black neighborhood took its place.

B-BURG became the external, "structural" force engineering the destruction of a Jewish neighborhood and telling blacks where they could live. But class conflicts within the Jewish community reinforced the process. The Federation of Jewish Charities and the Jewish community councils of the Boston area, all dominated by elite Jews, failed to support the working-class Jews of Dorchester and Mattapan who wanted to remain in their neighborhoods. The Jewish elite encouraged and in some cases financed the move of Jewish institutions to suburban neighborhoods and the sale of others to blacks or to the city. They also refused to invest in social services for Jews wishing to remain. By the early 1970s, the synagogues and Hebrew schools had either disappeared or been relocated to Brookline and Newton. Dreams of a racially integrated neighborhood had died, and feelings of betrayal and defeat stung in-coming blacks and outgoing Jews equally.

The authors are to be congratulated for uncovering the arcane and usually concealed story of how faceless financial institutions, with federal support, can quietly manipulate large groups of people to their own profit and with no sense of social responsibility. They have also brought to life key personalities, rabbis, politicians, financiers and developers, public school teachers, community activists, black political and educational leaders, even slumlords who verbalized the ideologies, formulated policies, and in many cases agonized over choices as neighbors moved away and racial tensions mounted. Aside from slumlords like the Mindicks, unscrupulous realtors, and a few black agitators, these men and women were not venal, but rather committed to defending professional modes of behavior or small pieces of turf. The varieties of opinion in each community and changing views in the face of neighborhood transition are also sensitively examined. Rabbis, Jewish parents, and African-American ministers and cultural leaders tried to maintain a respectable, integrated lower-middle-class neighborhood in the face of unscrupulous realtors, fearful Jewish residents, and the indifference of the Jewish community councils.

The authors also present extraordinary details, like the condemnation and punishment by a rabbinic court of Orthodox brothers for using a biblical verse as an acronym to disguise dummy corporations that exploited black tenants.

The difference between racial as opposed to ethnic neighborhood transition is also clarified by a few brief comparisons. The Jewish compared to the black move *into* Dorchester and Mattapan was accomplished over a longer period of time, the decade of the 1920s, rather than in two to three years (1968–1970), and apparently did not lead to violence or hostility. Similarly, the Italian move *out of* the West End in the 1950s led to a scattering of people throughout the Boston area, while blacks leaving Roxbury during the 1960s settled almost exclusively in nearby Dorchester and then Mattapan. Only complicity by lending institutions could have accelerated and channeled such a move, the authors conclude.

The passion with which the authors uncover the machinations of B-BURG and the politicians and condemn the Jewish community elite, nevertheless, betrays a certain blindness to context. The authors want us to believe, for example, that ordinary Jews would not have moved had the bureaucrats and realtors not forced them out. Yet neighborhoods like nearby Roxbury had been abandoned by Jews before the existence of a B-BURG and FHA insurance, partly because Jews feared black violence, and partly because successive generations of Jews changed their beliefs and lifestyles. The authors' nostalgia for ethnic ambiance often substitutes for a statistical analysis of why Jews left Dorchester and Mattapan. The pace of neighborhood change was no doubt quickened by B-BURG loans and unscrupulous realtors. But would not Mattapan's ethnic ambiance have faded as the children moved elsewhere? Brief references in the introduction to similar rapid neighborhood turnovers in locales like Mount Airy in Philadelphia are meant to reinforce the authors' thesis. But no evidence of collusion by bankers elsewhere is cited to prove the point. Furthermore, what the ethnic ambiance of Newton and Brookline are like, whether they meet the needs of a new generation, is an issue that is not discussed. This is not the question the authors have addressed, but to replace nostalgia with serious social analysis perhaps they should have.

Most important, neighborhood transition is not set into the context of the wider topic of relations between African-Americans and Jews. Readers familiar with Jonathan Kaufman's journalistic *Broken Alliance: The Turbulent Times Between Blacks and Jews in America* will recall its emphasis on political contacts in the civil rights movement and in the schools as setting the terms of inter-communal dialogue. Kaufman was only moderately concerned with residential integration, because the two communities have focused on their own institutions regardless of their physical proximity. Levine and Harmon suggest, instead, that the focus for inter-communal relations should be on personal contacts, presumably where prejudices might be best challenged through individual experiences. The institutional *machers*, however, have preempted that opportunity by forcing Jewish abandonment of neighborhoods like Mattapan.

Despite these criticisms, *The Death of an American City* properly calls attention to a facet of modern life far larger than black-Jewish relations. Corporate power and government bureaucrats can render communities expendable and ways of life obsolete with little fear of being called to account. This holds for logging towns in Oregon and factory districts in Detroit, as well as for residential neighborhoods in inner cities. But for ethnic communities caught in these transitions, their own forms of governance must bear special responsibility for failing to intervene.

— William Toll

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"Neighborhoods do not have to acquiesce to their own destruction." This is the conclusion Boston activist Michael Ansara asserts in the final pages of *The Death of an American Jewish Community*. This is also one of the lesson that authors Hillel Levine and Lawrence Harmon attempt to teach in their literary odyssey of the ebb and flow of Boston's Jewish and African-American communities in the twentieth century. This is an important work that will not only broaden our understanding of black-Jewish relations in a major urban center, but will also enhance our understanding of the complexities, tensions, compromises, and seeming failure of post-World War II urban renewal as it relates to the political economy of racial and ethnic relations in American society.

From the start the reader wonders just how reliable Levine and Harmon's historical reading is when they begin with the exaggerated assertion that most of what we know about American Jewry is based upon generalizations from Massachusetts—and then make no attempt to document their claim (p. 8). There is more than enough proof to show that despite recent historical works, most of what we still know about American Jewry is drawn from New York.¹ Such historical fallacies and loose reading of history flaw the book throughout. Nonetheless, *Death of an American Jewish Community* could be considered as the first book-length product of the revisionist school of black-Jewish historiography that argues that we must look at individual cases of black-Jewish relations to help us explain why the so-called "Grand Alliance" between African-Americans and Jews in the United States after 1915 was a troubled alliance and, perhaps, a contradiction of terms. The book likewise reveals how much more serious research is needed on this subject.

Levine and Harmon have drawn from a variety of historical and sociological secondary sources as well as made extensive use of personal interviews with leading participants in Boston's African-American, Jewish, and White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) communities to build their story. Yet, how could the authors give us a balanced picture of racial and ethnic history by saying next to nothing about the city's largely Irish Catholic population? The fact that Cardinal Richard J. Cushing worked to eliminate Catholic

anti-Semitism in the early 1950s (p. 38) obscures nearly a century of Irish hostility against Jews. Furthermore, Levine and Harmon also fail to take into account the historically bitter hostility between the Irish and African-American communities, a relationship one historian has described as so "sufficiently proverbial in historical reference that its patent acceptance, has served to discourage analysis."² These are crucial omissions since the actions of Irish and Catholic Bostonians in relationship to both Jews and African-Americans had a direct impact on the process of the "death" of Boston's Jewish community.

The authors' history of Boston's Jewish community along Blue Hill Avenue from the 1920s through the 1950s is informative, but their method of retelling by sharing the political career of Julius Ansel, "the most beloved politician in Jewish Boston," leaves much to be desired in terms of establishing the tone and direction of the book's overall focus. They spend nearly twenty pages creating "effect" by focusing on Ansel and then revert back to hastily telling the reader about Boston's first Jews in the eighteenth century, and leapfrogging back to the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s (pp. 31-36). In the process they fail to take into account significant historical events.

Levine and Harmon tell us that in the early twentieth century Jews and Italians made up more than 80 percent of the city's North End; after a fire on Palm Sunday 1908, 17,000 Jews were left homeless and subsequently migrated across the Mystic River into Roxbury and Dorchester. In the process of this migration, they somehow bypassed their most immediate ethnic neighbors—the Irish—and began to integrate among Boston's WASP Brahmins. Although Levine and Harmon claim that this sudden intrusion caused little if any trouble, and "the Protestant remnant grew accustomed to the sight of newcomers and grudgingly came to respect their talent for acculturation" (p. 36), this interpretation misses two crucial points. If, on the one hand, the Jewish newcomers fell prey to "clever Yankees" and "speculative builders quick to welcome the Jews," as they suggest but fail to document, it reflects an unusual reversal of the commonly held stereotypes and allegations reserved for Jews, especially in their historical

business dealings with other groups. This sheds an interesting light on the history of anti-Semitism in the United States by suggesting that perhaps WASPs found Jews convenient scapegoats for their own questionable economic behavior.³

Foremost of the authors' omissions is the dismissal or failure to look at the process of Jewish penetration into Boston's small but influential African-American community and the dynamics of neighborhood transition that witnessed black churches being transformed into Jewish synagogues and middle-class blacks moving to the "suburbs" before the start of the Great Southern Migration in 1915. Indeed, on the eve of the migration, one authority on Boston's ethnic and racial housing patterns emphasized competition for cheap rents on the part of the Jews and Irish and an unusual rate of suburban growth among blacks. Yet even this observer hinted at the early roots of black-Jewish economic tensions by speculating whether "west end history will repeat itself in the Jews getting control."⁴ Thus the early economic and demographic history of black-Jewish relations in Boston is overlooked and the authors fail to inform us of the early African-American community, albeit in a limited sense, until their discussion of "ethnic conflict and urban renewal in the mid-1960s" (chap. 4).

While it is a fact that people make history, the significance the authors place on the role and importance of singular personalities is often overstated and appears to be exaggerated. A prime example of explicit prejudice appears in chapter 2, "Movers and Shakers" (and later in chap. 3, p. 79), where the authors lay a great deal of the blame for the initial "destruction" of Boston's Jewish community on "the clever Jewish legal advisor," attorney Lewis Weinstein. Indeed, Weinstein is depicted as a *shtadlan*—an all-powerful member of Boston's Jewish community.

Claiming that Weinstein, because of his experience with the National Community Relations Advisory Council in the late 1940s, "lacked the confidence that Jews and blacks could live successfully in integrated areas," the authors create a strawman. In reality, Weinstein lacked the confidence for very historically logical reasons. Most Northern urban areas—New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Cleveland, and even border cities like

Baltimore—experienced increased racial and ethnic tensions in the 1930s and 1940s primarily due to the economic strains of the Depression. Blacks and Jews in particular waged inner-city warfare around the unequal ghetto economic relationships between Jewish merchants, landlords, and employers, and their African-American customers, tenants, and employees. The failure to resolve these tensions over the decades presented a continual thorn in the side of middle-class black and Jewish leaders and organizations like the local NAACP, Urban League, and Jewish community councils, whose leaders indeed made honest attempts to see African-Americans and Jews live in integrated harmony until massive Jewish flight took hold by the mid- to late 1950s.

Appeals by Jewish leaders like Weinstein at this time to prepare to move represented the same kind of movements that took place throughout the 1930s in Boston (or in Detroit, which this reviewer has studied), or when the migration of African-Americans from the South began in the mid-1910s.

There was no public discussion preceding large-scale movements at those times; Jewish residents who could simply left. Many, however, retained ownership of various properties and businesses. Levine and Harmon wait far too late in the book (the conclusion) to admit this. No doubt racism was involved, but historically, middle-class and elite blacks and Jews were ready to move whenever the lower- and working-class members of their own group “integrated” their segregated communities. Indeed, Levine and Harmon casually note that half of the 800 member families of Mishkan Tefila, the oldest Conservative synagogue in Massachusetts, lived in the suburbs by the early 1950s, but they do not tell us *why* they moved (p. 59).

Likewise, when the authors decide to tell us about economic tensions (i.e., “Jewish slumlords”), it is not until the middle of the book in a discussion of events that took place in 1968. While these events are extremely important, they are inserted at a point in the book that casts the issue as yet another problem among a myriad of complex developments facilitating the polarization of black-Jewish relations in Boston. In reality these economic tensions dated back to the beginning of black Jewish relations in Boston some fifty

years before. The failure to maintain the historical continuum of such critical factors decreases the ability of the authors to explain what happened to Boston's African-American and Jewish communities within an overall historical context. An earlier mention of the "historic tensions between blacks and Jews in Roxbury and Dorchester" is just a mention and offers little historical insight (pp. 122–123).

On yet another level, the authors show the delicate position of Boston's rabbis when they attempted to inspire a moral racial vision in their congregations. What we see in the 1960s is that in Boston, as elsewhere, Jewish support of civil rights—particularly open housing—was confined to a group of idealistic liberals like Eastern Gas and Fuel president Eli Goldston, radicals like attorney Lawrence Shubow, and clergy like Rabbi Meyer Strassfeld. The latter quickly found out from his congregation that they were just as racist as any other white ethnic group that historically decried the arrival of African-Americans (pp. 88–90).

The main villain in Levine and Harmon's estimation is the federal government and its post-World War II housing policies. These policies eventually drew in Boston's elite bankers, politicians, real estate agents, and of course African-American and Jewish Bostonians who were directly affected. The most fateful event for the Jewish residents of Mattapan, according to the authors, was the day in August 1968 when Carl Ericson, vice-president of Suffolk Franklin Bank and a member of the Boston Banks Urban Renewal Group (B-BURG), drew a red arc on a wall map of Boston's model cities area that "essentially walled off the city's Jewish Community."⁵ What followed over the next four years, according to Levine and Harmon, was an insidious, almost militaristic invasion of heretofore-propertyless black Bostonians and accompanying African-American lumpenproletarians attempting to find the American Dream with the help of B-BURG. Although the authors do not tell us the economic backgrounds of these new homeowners, one is left to assume that they held a precarious employment history and future because foreclosure and abandonment were the order of the day by 1972. The Jewish population had been reduced from some 40,000 to less than 3,000. What was

allegedly intended to create "healthily integrated neighborhoods in a way that might have strengthened alliances between the black and Jewish community, created victims looking on helplessly as larger economic forces intensified the tendency toward conflict and mutual hostility" (p. 276). By the early 1970s little discrimination was shown by African-American criminals in their attacks on black and Jewish residents.

In searching for culprits to explain Boston's tragedy, Levine and Harmon find more than enough guilt to go around. On the one hand, the "destruction" of Boston's Jewish community is the fault of the WASP "Vault" (Boston's home-grown version of C. Wright Mills's "Power Elite") in Boston and their proteges in Washington connected with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). On the other hand, it is the fault of every segment of Boston's African-American and Jewish community for failing to figure out what was happening and invoking the power of united grassroots political activism to stop the ill-conceived "destruction." Indeed, the way Levine and Harmon have told the story, the 1960s liberal vision of racial integration backfired and led to community destruction. The token Jewish member of the Vault, Eli Goldston, is portrayed as a well-meaning accomplice to the B-BURG initiative, and his role confirms from Boston that Jews did not "dominate" or "control" big business, even though this lone Jewish player is characterized as having a disproportionate amount of influence.

Levine and Harmon go to great lengths to show Jewish involvement in this "tragedy of good intentions" even before the implementation of the B-BURG plan in 1968. The predecessor to B-BURG, the HUD-FHA-inspired Boston Urban Rehabilitation Program (BURP), was administered in Boston by "four Jews and an Irishman" beginning in 1967. Subsequent neighborhood developments and controversy seemed to confirm to the African-American neighborhood newcomers and tenants the validity of the stereotypes about Jewish landlords and property owners (pp. 114-126).

Jewish participants in the BURP and B-BURG initiatives, according to the authors, were really only pawns in the larger ambitions

of Boston Mayor Kevin White. Levine and Harmon argue that in the aftermath of the urban unrest that had plagued Watts and Detroit, the mayor and his aides, along with officers of the city's major savings banks, envisioned BURP and B-BURG as a way for Boston to avoid similar kinds of racial unrest. By emphasizing in their introductory remarks that "urban warfare arrived late in Boston" before describing the Grove Hall riots of early June 1967 (p. 98), they lead the reader to believe that "Roxbury had lagged considerably behind Harlem, Detroit, and Watts in the outbreak of major urban uprisings." The fact of the matter was that Grove Hill, while not nearly as destructive and violent, preceded the 1967 Detroit riot by almost two months. This is but another example of the authors trying a little too hard to place Boston on an isolated plane within the historical realm of 1960s urban-racial unrest. If White and his aides allegedly knew that the money from the city's Vault and the federal government could "never offset decades of disinvestment and 'redlining,'" it did not stop them from following through in what proved to be a most disastrous course for Boston's black and Jewish inner city residents. Some twenty years later, White smugly told Levine and Harmon that he didn't hear the Jewish community complaining about what happened—"was the patient dying anyhow and we accelerated the death?" (p. 316).

The overall impression one gets after reading this book is that Levine and Harmon remain perplexed and disenchanted at just how all the events they chronicle could have happened. Moreover, we still lack a comprehensive local history that understands all the economic, cultural, and political dynamics that created tensions among urban America's African-American and Jewish communities. *Death of an American Jewish Community* tells us a part of this story in Boston, but not all. When you compare the fates of the Jewish and African-American communities in Boston with their counterparts elsewhere in the 1960s and early 1970s, the story of B-BURG is but one disturbing variation to a scenario whose ending was always the same: former Jewish communities and their spiritual cores now lay outside big-city limits. Most middle-class African-Americans who can afford to, likewise, live as far away from the turmoil of the inner city as possible. Meanwhile, the so-

called urban underclass, disproportionately African-American but also infused with whites and Hispanics, plays the game of survival of the fittest.

Boston's tragedy of good intentions reveals that the 1960s cure for America's historic racial ills only scratched the surface of an endemic problem. Civil rights laws, money, multicultural education, and fair-employment opportunities are vital ingredients toward solving these centuries-old problems. Yet it seems that "the powers that be" in America really do not want to pay the full price for racial equality and harmony. Maybe one day sincere African-Americans, Jews, WASPs, and other ethnic Americans will unite, locate "the external forces that function independently of their wills and interests," and kill the dreaded monster.

—Marshall F. Stevenson, Jr.

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Notes

1. Judith Endelman clearly shows the dominance of New York in the introduction to her *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis, 1819 to the Present* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), pp. 1-2. Another, more recent local history is Sidney Bollosky, *Harmony and Dissonance: Voices of Jewish Identity in Detroit* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991).

2. Dennis Clark, *The Irish Relations: Trials of an Immigrant Tradition* (East Rutherford, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 1982), pp. 143-156.

3. Indeed Boston's Jews did not bypass settlement among the city's Irish after the 1908 fire. Historian Dennis Ryan notes that Jewish entrance into the Irish North End neighborhoods caused rents to "skyrocket." Irish policemen harassed Jewish peddlers and grocers, charging them with violations of the Sunday blue laws, and Irish landlords attacked their Jewish counterparts for encroaching on their domain. See Dennis P. Ryan, *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845-1917* (East Rutherford, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 1983), p. 137.

4. B-BURG was a bank consortium used by former Mayor John Collins in the early 1960s to conduct urban renewal and create easily attainable, low-interest home mortgage loans for African-Americans (see pp. 76-82).

5. John Daniels, *In Freedom's Birthplace: A Study of the Boston Negroes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1914), pp. 142-149.

Review Essay

Separate Spheres:
New Approaches to American
Jewish Womanhood

Joyce Antler

Glenn, Susan A. *Daughters of the Shtetl: Life and Labor in the Immigrant Generation*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990. xii, 312pp.

Morton, Marian J. *Emma Goldman and the American Left: "Nowhere at Home"*. New York: Twayne, 1992. xi, 183 pp.

Perry, Elisabeth Israels. *Belle Moskowitz: Feminine Politics and the Exercise of Power in the Age of Alfred E. Smith*. New York: Routledge, 1992. (Hardcover ed., Oxford University Press, 1987). xv, 280 pp.

Rogow, Faith. *"Gone to Another Meeting": The National Council of Jewish Women, 1893-1993*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993. xiii, 300 pp.

Shapiro, Herbert, and David L. Sterling, Edited by. *"I Come from the Working Class": The Unfinished Autobiography of Rose Pastor Stokes*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992. xiv, 173 pp.

Following the pathbreaking volume, *The Jewish Woman in America*, written almost two decades ago by Charlotte Baum, Paula Hyman, and Sonya Michel, scholars have been slowly constructing a history of American Jewish women based on detailed monographic studies. Although most of their work continues to highlight the immigrant period, the new studies point to a full-bodied, varied, and complex field, rich in relevance—yet distinctive—both to American women's history and to Jewish studies. Along with such works as Sydney Stahl Weinberg's *The World of Our Mothers* and Linda Gordon Kuzmack's *Woman's Cause*, the books under review suggest the multiple frameworks represented by this emerging

history: individual and organizational studies; the linkage of class, ethnicity, and gender; the combined focus on work, social action, philanthropy, and domesticity; and the interrogation of the changing meanings of identity.¹

Among the problems under discussion in these new histories are a number of familiar questions which take on new meanings when placed in the context of Jewish ethnicity, politics, and culture. The paradoxical character of the idea of separate spheres takes a leading role, for example, in several new books about American Jewish womanhood. In *"Gone to Another Meeting": A History of the National Council of Jewish Women, 1893-1993*, Faith Rogow argues that a separate-spheres doctrine, embodied in the central notion of motherhood, framed, and ultimately limited, the Council's varied endeavors in religious education and social reform over the course of a century. However innovative, its immigrant aid programs, because they employed the language and symbols of family—e.g., Council agents battling white slave traders to protect immigrant "daughters," "adopting" runaways, and offering classes on "parenting"—reinforced traditional notions of Jewish women's domestic place. Similarly, because they emphasized biblical heroines and childbearing roles, the Council's study circles, which Rogow admits were a kind of "middle-class women's yeshiva," and for some highly educated women, a substitute for entering the rabbinate, did not so much lead out of the home as right back into it. Further evidence of the prominence of separate-sphere notions among Council women is found in members' opposition to the ordination of women as rabbis and their ambivalence about woman suffrage. And while the NCJW was quick to affiliate with the League of Women Voters, whose functions it saw as extending motherhood, not until the 1960s did it support the Equal Rights Amendment. Equality of women and men, Rogow argues, would have seriously jeopardized Council's primary identification with the tenets of maternalism.

Given the force and endurance of the Jewish laws and customs which strictly separated male and female roles inside and outside the synagogue, the use of a dual-spheres argument as a strategic device, helping to legitimate activities that would otherwise have

been considered threatening or even revolutionary, might offer an explanation for the pervasiveness of the maternal language Rogow locates in Council programs, even those incorporating new female roles. But Rogow dismisses this possibility. Council women internalized ideas of separate spheres, she claims, using them long after the NCJW become an established organization. Rather than a matter of expediency, its continuing support of maternalism stood witness to the staying power of the traditional image of the Jewish "Woman of Valor."

Rogow provides important information on the growth of the NCJW, especially in the formative period before 1920. She is particularly insightful about the declining religious emphasis of the Council, a consequence of the success of its own social action programs, but also of its policies of pluralism and nonsectarianism, which diluted its ability to address controversial issues, and of competing institutions within the Jewish community. Her overarching interpretation of the Council's maternalism, however, is less convincing. Rogow regards maternalism as all-embracing, continuous, and as a direct reflection of personal, internal identity, not as a metaphor—or trope—which may have functioned to express (and perhaps to change) external political relations. In Rogow's view, the NCJW's maternalism was a perfect embodiment of the doctrine of "true womanhood," named by Barbara Welter almost two decades ago to describe native-born women's prescriptive roles in the antebellum period (not at the turn of the century, as Rogow claims). The difference between "true womanhood" and the new womanhood of settlement house and other Progressive Era women's reforms might more properly characterize the ways in which the NCJW used the rhetoric of "municipal housekeeping" to forge new paths for Jewish women in philanthropy, social action, and religious reform. In fact, by the 1920s, the NCJW became a leading, and often lonely, voice in support of citizenship training for immigrant women, arguing that such women needed to know and be prepared to act upon their rights and responsibilities as public citizens. In the 1930s and 1940s, the Council formulated new educational and leadership programs in political and international affairs for its membership and devised major pro-

grams to aid and rescue European refugees from fascism. Even during this time, civil rights education and cooperative programs with black groups occupied NCJW attention. While maternalism might have remained the Council's symbolic language, at the same time it continually undertook new ventures directly related to non-domestic concerns.

In *Daughters of the Shtetl*, Susan Glenn draws a vivid, multidimensional portrait of wage-earning immigrant women employed in the garment trades, women whose energy and commitment to social betterment helped define the trade union movement in the early twentieth century. Tracing the evolution of women's work from Eastern European shtetls to the New World, Glenn contends that women's factory and union experiences, and not just their domestic roles, were an important "crucible for feminine identity." Women's work force experiences, combined with their participation in collective acts of resistance, transformed the lives of the immigrant daughters as much as they transformed the garment industry.

The self-worth and collective consciousness these women acquired as working daughters sustained their activism even when, pulled by the countervailing pressures of romantic love and domestic respectability, they left the work force. Though as wives and mothers, most did not engage in direct political action, neither did they leave politics behind. "Work, activism and domesticity were never clearly demarcated stages in the life cycle," Glenn suggests, nor was female identity linear and static. So the life course of this generation moved "not in a straight line but back and forth like a pendulum," embodying in its tensions the swings of tradition and modernity that characterized their complex adjustment to American life.

While Glenn acknowledges the importance of female bonding in the workplace and in the strike movement, she rejects female separatism as a defining characteristic of immigrant daughters. To the contrary, Glenn insists that even so-called women's strikes, like the historic 1909 garment workers' uprising, were "mixed sex, ethnic working-class community events"; as opposed to the woman-centered politics of American middle-class reformers (or, we might

add, of Jewish middle-class groups like the NCJW), those of the garment workers reflected "partnership and cooperation with men," though along class and community lines. She carefully develops this argument by showing that women unionists' demands were supported by parents, other relatives, neighbors, and friends; after leaving the labor force, Jewish women in turn supported the strike activities of working-class comrades.

In working-class women's lives, therefore, class consciousness combined with gender and ethnic solidarity to shape Jewish women's identity. Rejecting the primacy of sisterhood or separate spheres, Glenn's model is one of cooperation between the sexes. Even though some of the more radical Jewish workers opposed gender discrimination within the union movement (ILGWU activist and WTUL member Pauline Newman, for example, protested that women unionists were "swallowed up in a sea of masculinity"), Glenn insists that their highest priority was never feminist reform but class solidarity.

Glenn's provocative thesis places her in the camp of those American historians who, like Nancy Hewitt, argue that the model of sisterhood belies the real tensions that existed between women of different classes and ethnic groups as well as the evidence of community cohesion that united same-class women and men around common interests. I would like to suggest, however, that neither "separate spheres" nor "mutuality" may fully encompass the range of behavior and identities that working women experienced at different periods of time. To extend Glenn's useful metaphor about the components of activism and domesticity that constituted immigrant daughters' changing identity, perhaps those of ethnicity, class, and gender also stood in perpetual tension, moving back and forth like a pendulum, with one or another marker of identity becoming salient at a particular personal or historical moment. For example, in the 1920s and 1930s some former strikers took leading roles in socialist- or communist-sponsored consumer organizations which hoped to organize Jewish women around their roles as wives and mothers; maternalism thus became a key tool of organizing campaigns. During the Holocaust, many of these same women organized specifically as Jewish women in

order to fight anti-Semitism and support Jewish (specifically Jewish women's) culture. Yet although these women moved into activities that highlighted gender or ethnic consciousness at these specific times, they never relinquished their class identity.

The fluidity of Jewish female identity, and the ability of Jewish women to express the often-competing claims of class, gender, and ethnicity, is revealed in the life stories of several prominent Jewish women. Elisabeth Perry's biography of Belle Israels Moskowitz, who is best known as political advisor to New York governor, and presidential candidate, Alfred E. Smith, also illuminates the ways in which pioneering women like Moskowitz often achieved their breakthroughs by conforming to established female roles. Modest but shrewd, feminine yet tough, as she was seen by contemporaries, Moskowitz wielded her influence from the sidelines, knowing her place as a woman and using it to her advantage. "By presenting herself as a self-effacing Jewish woman who had no interest in outshining the man she served," Perry writes, Moskowitz allowed other men to tolerate, and even to welcome, her substantial power.

Perry explains that Moskowitz's apprenticeship with the New York Council of Jewish Women helped prepare her for a political career that successfully crossed gender boundaries at the same time that it employed traditionally gendered images and stereotypes. As a member of the New York section's board and chair of its philanthropy committee, Moskowitz (then Belle Israels) learned how to analyze social problems and develop and implement solutions; introduced to the legislative world of Albany, she became an expert witness and negotiator. Perry concludes that the Council's "all-female, all-Jewish environment" gave Moskowitz the chance to develop leadership skills which served her well long after the Council itself proved too narrow a base for her ambitions. Perry points out that the Council's focus on programs involving women and children was especially helpful to Moskowitz and like-minded associates because it allowed them to resolve inner conflicts about leaving their traditional sphere, the home. While not denying her subject's genuine embrace of a feminine image, Perry acknowledges the symbolic power of maternalism as a justification

for public work that was, in the last analysis, extremely nontraditional. After all, Moskowitz—who happens to have been Perry's grandmother—wound up managing Alfred Smith's nomination to the presidency in 1928. During the election, she was the only woman on the Democratic National Committee and director of all campaign publicity.

Rose Pastor Stokes and Emma Goldman broke other kinds of political barriers. As daughters of East European Jewish families, they might well have been among the immigrant women whose lives Susan Glenn chronicles. Both spent a good number of years working in factories—Stokes in a Cleveland cigar factory, or "buckeye," and Goldman in garment shops in Rochester; each maintained her allegiance to working-class interests after leaving the work force, as do Glenn's immigrant daughters. Yet none of Glenn's women entered the public arena as vociferously and uncompromisingly as these two radicals. With their unabashed calls to revolution, each captured public attention for many decades, becoming synonymous with the idea of the "foreign" agitator.

However, the question of the Jewish identity of these two women is not addressed in Shapiro and Sterling's lengthy introduction to Stokes's unfinished autobiography or by Marion Morton. Shapiro and Sterling describe Stokes's early years as "a classic story of the immigrant," and consider her later life much as Stokes did, as a spokesperson for the "working class," despite the fact that she lived the life of a woman of privilege after her marriage to millionaire James Graham Phelps Stokes. The editors also comment on Stokes's participation in the birth control movement and the coalescence, in some of her writings, of her socialist commitments and feminism; these issues are not related to the question of her Jewish identity.

Yet on several occasions, the autobiography articulates Stokes's seeming break with "the principle of nationality," as she called it, in favor of the universalistic, classless vision of socialism. How, Stokes asked, could the idea of a homeland in Zion unite the antagonistic interests of the "Jewish exploiter" and the "Jewish sweatshop slave"? Did not religious belief lead to acceptance, rather

than challenging, of the horrors of poverty?

Although Stokes apparently rejected the particularism of Judaism and Zionism, her ties to her heritage were visible at various points in her life. Stokes left the ranks of factory workers when she became a columnist for the *Jewish Daily News* (the *Yiddishes Tageblatt*) in New York; in that position, she wrote about keeping the Sabbath, about the courageous forces of Zionism, and of her outrage at the Kishinev pogroms, in addition to other topics of Jewish interest. Though one observer mentioned in the introduction calls Stokes "spiritually disembodied," she maintained links with the secular Jewish community, writing for Jewish publications, translating the Yiddish poet Morris Rosenfeld, encouraging East European Jewish artists, and continuing her friendships with the immigrant girls she had known in Cleveland. A strong case can be made, as Stokes did, that her defining interest in socialism was deeply influenced by the Jewish messianic tradition she had imbibed in childhood.³

The relationship among class, gender, and ethnicity is not a central concern of Marion Morton's study of Emma Goldman. Drawing heavily on material from the existing biographies of Goldman, Morton focuses on Goldman's career as an anarchist. Her synthesis of the key aspects of Goldman's politics and her relationship to the American left will prove useful to those interested in the more narrow focus of a "political biography," as Morton describes her book, but readers who want a more fully realized emotional and intellectual portrait of Goldman should turn to Alice Wexler's excellent two-volume study, and to the works by Falk and Drinnon.

Morton writes, for example, that once Goldman found her place within the "immigrant" left, she never lost touch with her immigrant past or her Jewish roots, even as her ties with the "American" left intensified. Morton mentions Goldman's visit to the Ukraine in the early 1920s as reminding her of her Jewish roots; Wexler explains that while Goldman was shocked by the virulent anti-Semitism she found in Russia, including the rape of thousands of Jewish women, her solidarity with her ethnic roots remained partial, overridden by what she felt were the more

urgent needs of class. Though Goldman opposed Hitler, the conflict between her sense of identity as a Jew and her commitment to the universalist anarchist movement prevented her from an early alignment with the Allied cause; on several occasions, she seemed to blame Jews for failing to show "the least resistance" to fascism. And although Goldman argued for Jews' right of asylum in Palestine, she did not support the idea of a national state, which she felt would replicate the evils of all governments.

According to Wexler, Goldman's ties to class were ultimately as complex as those of ethnicity. She considered many on the Jewish left to be timid, bourgeois "all-rightniks" who retained little revolutionary fervor; she contrasted them unfavorably to individuals from the "respectable classes," who with their "spiritual hunger and unrest" had become the real pioneers of anarchism. Unlike Stokes, Goldman felt that socialism could not usher in the true revolution, since it would merely replicate the evils of other forms of state. The only governing apparatus she would accept belonged to her own personhood; her revolution would liberate the individual from all forms of oppression—state, capitalist, religious. That Goldman attracted many native- and foreign-born allies in these beliefs, including immigrant working-class Jewish women, shows the range of political positions held by radical women. Broad ethnic and class partnerships sometimes won the day; on other occasions, these alliances splintered.

Both Morton's book and the Stokes autobiography reveal the importance of women's issues to the revolutionary amalgam each woman constructed. Yet although Goldman and Stokes were leaders in the fight for birth control and both were especially concerned with the exploitation of working women, neither accepted the appellation of "feminist" or the rubric of universal sisterhood. Though women's issues formed a compelling and essential part of their radical programs, they insisted their goals were wider.

The stories of these influential women—Moskowitz, the ultimate political insider, and Stokes and Goldman, outsiders who were imprisoned and sentenced to exile (though Stokes's case was dismissed on appeal)—help to fill in the outlines of the new Jewish womanhood sketched by Glenn and Rogow. Taken together, these

five books bear witness to the variety of paths taken by Jewish women as they responded to the opportunities and disappointments of American life in the early twentieth century. Further studies in women's biography and social and political history can illuminate the multiple components of Jewish women's changing identity and the ways in which they sought and used domestic, political, and rhetorical power to achieve diverse goals.

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Notes

1. Among the earliest general studies of Jewish women, see Charlotte Baum, Paula Hyman, and Sonya Michel, *The Jewish Woman in America* (New York: Dial Press, 1975); Linda Gordon Kuzmack, *Woman's Cause: The Jewish Woman's Movement in England and the United States, 1881-1933* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990); Jacob Rader Marcus, *The American Jewish Woman, 1654-1980* (New York: Ktav, 1981) and *The American Jewish Woman: A Documentary History* (New York: Ktav, 1981); June Sochen, *Consecrate Every Day: The Public Lives of Jewish American Women, 1880-1980* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981); and Sydney Stahl Weinberg, *The World of Our Mothers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).
2. On this point, see especially Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75 (June 1988): 9-39.
3. See Arthur and Pearl Zipser, *Fire and Grace: The Life of Rose Pastor Stokes* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989).
4. See Richard Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise: A Biography of Emma Goldman* (New York: Bantam Books, 1973); Candace Falk, *Love, Anarchy and Emma Goldman: A Biography* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1984); and Alice Wexler, *Emma Goldman in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984) and *Emma Goldman in Exile: From the Russian Revolution to the Spanish Civil War* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989).

Review Essay
Choose Life:
Approaches to Divinity in Four
Contemporary Jewish Poets

Gary Pacernick

Kessler, Milton. *The Grand Concourse*. Binghamton, N.Y.: MSS, 1990. 90 pp.

Schwartz, Howard. *Sleepwalking Beneath the Stars*. Kansas City, Mo.: Book Mark Press, 1991. 64 pp.

Vinner, Shlomo. *Jerusalem as She Is*. Translated and selected by Laya Firestone-Seghi, Seymour Mayne, and Howard Schwartz. Edited by Dan Jaffe. Kansas City, Mo.: Book Mark Press, 1991. 95 pp.

Whitman, Ruth. *Laughing Gas: Poems New and Selected, 1963–1990*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990. 281 pp.

I offer you the choice of life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life and then you and your descendants will live; choose the Lord your God, obey him and hold fast to him: that is life for you and length of days in the land which the Lord swore to give to your forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Deuteronomy 30:19–20

Trying to delineate a case for American Jewish poets as distinct from other American poets is challenging indeed. In my book *Memory and Fire: Ten American Jewish Poets*, I chose those poets "who act as voices and exemplars of Jewish moral and spiritual rectitude and justice" as well as those who describe "the Jewish past through an art of imaginative memory." In some cases the poet combines memory and fire. For example, Allen Ginsberg's prophetic poems "Howl" and "Kaddish" were influenced by the memory of his mother, Naomi. Memory of the prophetic tradition as well as the life and martyrdom of Rabbi Akiba inspired Muriel

Rukeyser to denounce injustice and oppression and envision a world of freedom and justice.

In *Sing a New Song: American Jewish Poets Since the Holocaust*, a subsequent study dealing with a more diverse group of poets, I opened the parameters to show that these poets express their Jewishness in ways ranging "from realistic portraits of ethnic experience to mystical meditations and myths, from the Holocaust to Jerusalem, from Biblical allusions and adaptations to feminist revisions."²

Now, in this third attempt at the subject, I am for the first time writing about an Israeli poet, Shlomo Vinner, in addition to three Americans. I want to try a different approach, which has been suggested by what I see as the central position of divinity in Vinner's poetry. For Vinner, God is part of the overall challenge of living in the Jewish state. Although the poet is often skeptical of God's powers, he constantly addresses God in his poetry. The Israeli poet's articulation of divinity's role in his life leads me to suggest that our three Americans (and many of the others I have read) write, at least implicitly, about the traditional God's absence in their lives. Perhaps for this very reason, their poetry can be read as an attempt to discover new approaches to or analogues for divinity that are true to their chosen lives in the diaspora.

Shlomo Vinner

In the collection *Jerusalem as She Is*, Laya Firestone-Seghi, Seymour Mayne, and Howard Schwartz have translated a representative sample of Shlomo Vinner's work to date into English. Since any poetry is very difficult to translate, it comes as a pleasant surprise that these English versions of Hebrew poems are consistently clear, gripping, and powerful. In this poet's art, biblical and present-day Israel, God and human beings are inextricably bound in what T. S. Eliot called "the life of significant soil." God and the Holy Land are part of the process of living and dying as manifested most hauntingly in war, because Vinner is indeed a soldier-poet, who has risked death for his country.

Risking death as an Israeli Jew, Vinner gains from Israel an

order, a structure, within which to address the Jewish God. As the soldier-poet debates, analyzes, and questions the role of God and Israel in the midst of war, he suggests several paradoxes. One paradox of Vinner's poetry is that in war's setting, he finds beauty:

Summer falls
and grief grows long
as the shadow
of the mountains.

[p. 18]

These haunting and beautiful lines are from a poem, "Autumn Maneuvers," that describes soldiers practicing for war. It is as if, with death omnipresent, the poet finds a life-affirming vision in nature. He discovers his voice as well, a remarkably lucid, insightful, eloquent way of articulating the act of being intensely alive. And Vinner pictures the world around him, especially the very ground on which war is fought: "A shiver passes through the pines, / white dust awakens" (p. 14).

The paradox at the heart of Vinner's poetry is that while he is totally committed to his life as an Israeli, he questions the viability of God and the Jewish state. He refers to "Jerusalem 1967" as "the former address of God" (p. 9), for God is silent and Israel's existence is in doubt. Part of the problem may be that while God operates from above, if not beyond, human comprehension, the soldier experiences life-and-death contingencies in the here-and-now. In "Erev Rosh Hashana" the poet says, "God hurts us with his thoughts" (p. 14). Since God operates in ways that are secret to people, they cannot be aware of their destinies, which may include death on the battlefield. Now, at this time of the New Year celebration, God's ways may appear frivolous at best, and the messiah has not yet come despite the blowing of the ram's horn.

Because of the poet's identification with Israel, there is a constant sense of parallelism between biblical and present-day reality: "For the chief musician of the pneumatic drills—a psalm" (p. 33). "Now," says the poet, "with our sins / as in exile / we inhabit our own land" (p. 33). Perhaps most hauntingly, in "Jerusalem as She Is," the poet imagines that God "toys" with his holy city and watches what will happen to the wolf and sheep he "imprisons" in

a cage. Far from messianic unity and peace, it appears that Jerusalem is a place of contradictions and conflicts that threaten to explode. The poet holds God accountable, but in so doing he retains God as an active force in his art.

In the major poem in this collection, "From This Day of Yom Kippur," Shlomo Vinner creates a structure from the services for Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, that in addition to organizing the movement, the action, of the poem, also provides an ironic contrast between the literal meaning of the liturgy and its meaning in the context of war. Each of the numbered sections is named after a part of the Yom Kippur services as well as a key aspect of the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

Only a superb poet could so powerfully and adroitly address and dramatize such crucial religious and human questions. At the core is the peril of God's chosen people, who on not finding God in the world may live a life of "nothing." With war comes the constant threat of annihilation, and if that occurred then the "glorified" and "sanctified" Name would rule "alone." How can God allow war's death and destruction to reign in the world? How can the Jew pray that the gates of heaven open, when "In the trenches and the pits / we already know we are dust"? At this point, the confounded poet prays that God save those who "went through fire and water," if not for their sake, at least "for yourself" (pp. 66-67).

Throughout this and other poems, Vinner acknowledges his skepticism, but at the same time he addresses God and challenges God to come through, as did the biblical poet and prophet, for he realizes, "Who are we / if nobody answers?" (p. 69). Somehow he retains his faith, his religious awe.

But there is more than religious questioning and faith here; there is also verisimilitude:

In the morning on the mountains,
sounds of soldiers coughing
and desert birds.

[p. 70]

Vinner has the descriptive resources of language to make the reader share the sensation of being there as witness. The presence of

ancient parallels adds depth to the presentation. For here on this very ground Sodom and Gomorrah occurred. Past, present, and future converge. As if miraculously, the poet continues to live and imagine hints of holiness:

Sometimes I see a bush moving
in the wind, hear a piece of scrap rattling,
and the river—a curved metal strip
shining with stars.

[pp. 70–71]

Yet the most overwhelming question remains: “and for how long / shall the people of Israel live?” (p. 71). As if in answer to this question, Vinner becomes cynical as he envisions “Not a ‘chosen people,’ / only a ‘cosmic disease’ ” (p. 71).

At least two things save Vinner from cynicism. First there is his life-affirming attachment to nature:

When I lie down on the ground
I discover
a colony of snails
on a green stalk of thistle.
So many forms of being
and this is mine.

[p. 76]

Part of this poet’s modern faith is that he is part of nature, part of a constant cycle of being. There is also his sense of the biblical past, his religious tradition:

Stones at the head of those who sleep
made soft dreams for Jacob,
angels going up and down.
For me—hard dreams,
soldiers in a pup tent,
the sky falling like a ceiling
into restless sleep . . .

[p. 77]

In this masterful poem, the soldier-poet celebrates Yom Kippur; this is indeed the time to ask monumental questions and be absolved of sin. Even if he senses that slain soldiers will never directly know God’s help, and even if the gate which is supposed

to be open is closed, somehow Vinner envisions his world through a Jewish lens. God continues to live in nature and in Jewish ritual and prayer.

Howard Schwartz

The key to Howard Schwartz's poetry, as well as to his scholarship, is his love for midrashic reimagining of Jewish legends and myths. In this sense, he is a scholar-poet who builds on the tradition of Jewish texts. While he emphasizes neither the traditional Jewish God nor Israel, he does integrate mystical symbols and myths into his verse, and he is intrigued by the tension between two approaches to Jewish texts and traditions and the ramifications of messianism.

In "The Covenant of the Stars," the poet dramatizes the conflict in the Jewish textual tradition, and within the narrator, between law and lore—between the 613 commandments and Aggadah, the legends of rabbinic literature. At first the narrator tries to avoid the law and its demands, which Schwartz calls "The Covenant of the Sands," hiding from pillars of fire and salt, both of which suggest divine might: the pillar of fire that Moses and the people of Israel followed through the wilderness, as well as the pillar of salt, which Lot's wife turned into when she looked back toward Sodom and Gomorrah as she, Lot, and their two daughters fled.

I tried
To escape
The covenant of the sands
Every demand
Of destiny
Every shadow
Of the law
I hid
From the pillar of salt
By day
Ran from the pillar of fire
At night.

"The Covenant of the Stars" is represented by natural growth and fecundity.

A seed taking root
A ripe dandelion
Waiting for the wind
A sensual stone
A tree breathing
Above the living
Waters.

The tension between the two covenants creates a rich potential for meaning in this poem. Nevertheless, as an astute scholar and editor, Schwartz is aware that if his poems are to succeed they must reflect his unique voice and experience as well as the presence of the Jewish text, to which many readers may be oblivious. This is a major part of his challenge as a Jewish poet.

In his essay "Miriam's Well: A Personal Account of Drawing upon Jewish Myths and Legends,"³ the poet characterizes "Sleepwalking Beneath the Stars" as based on the talmudic legend of the four who enter Pardes, showing the dangers of mystical contemplation. Although the poem does not fully dramatize the dangers that the woman (muse/poet) must face, its language is suggestive:

She has entered
A braille landscape
Waiting to be
Read.

The poet may want us to believe that the "braille landscape" can literally cause the protagonist to lose her way—a form of blindness. Perhaps more plausible is the possibility that ordinary vision or seeing cannot result in poetry. There must be a new kind of perception leading to a new language of feeling and intuition, which may be dangerous to achieve.

The most substantial attempt Schwartz has yet made to embody his reimagining of mystical texts is "The Nine Faces to the Bride." Here he invokes the Shekinah, the feminine element of divinity, as well as the legend of the shattering of the vessels and scattering of the sparks. In kabbalistic thought, the Shekinah is in exile from God, and redemption can only be achieved by the reunification of the two. The Sabbath Queen is one of the Shekinah's identities.

Kabbalistic thought also propounds the notion that a vast number of primordial sparks escaped at the beginning of time when, as part of the process of creation, the vessels containing divine light broke open. According to Schwartz the scholar, gathering the sparks transforms the fall into redemption. Thus, behind this kabbalistic myth is the messianic longing for *tikkun*, worldly redemption and unification.⁴

In "The Nine Faces of the Bride," a poem in nine parts, Schwartz reimagines the legends of the Shekinah and the gathering of the sparks. His challenge is a daunting one: to picture the ineffable. In the fourth part, a loose spark sets the Shekinah's robe on fire, and from that fire all that remains of her robe is a thread from which

She weaves
Another garment
on the loom that stretches
From heaven
To earth . . .

Schwartz has created a remarkable image so that the reader can see the myth in a new and clear focus. For six days the Shekinah searches for the lost sparks, and then, as the Sabbath Queen, she weaves

Sabbath songs
into a garland
Of prayers
Into a crown
Of blessings
Into a tabernacle
Of peace.

The eighth section is the poet's original glimpse of the possibility for mystical oneness and unity as well as messianic redemption. In the act of gathering the scattered sparks, the Shekinah finds with every spark "A fallen star / Once a sun itself." This process teaches her "The secrets of Ascent":

How to rise up from your resting place
How to carry your cargo of light
How to break open like a blossom
At every turning of the spiral

Coiled inside
The permutations
Of the flame.

Echoing the language of the epiphany at the conclusion of James Wright's "A Blessing," "if I stepped out of my body, I would break / Into blossom," the poet Howard Schwartz renders his version of messianic oneness and unity, the flowering of the mystical flame.

Milton Kessler

For Shlomo Vinner, Jewishness is synonymous with a country threatened by war but imbued with the spirit of God and the biblical past. Howard Schwartz turns to aggadic texts to find mystical illumination. For Milton Kessler, Jewishness, except for the ethnic New York or Israeli settings of some of his poems, has become almost subliminal. And the Jewish God seems invisible and silent. Kessler's main link to Judaism is through his father, who exists in the best poems as a source of prophetic voice and vision.

Not only is the father the strongest character in Kessler's poetry; the relationship between father and son is crucial to his most interesting poems, such as "God's Cigar" and "Right Now." These poems share some essential qualities. The poet is directly and passionately involved in the poem; he has something he must say, something of obvious importance, something critical, shocking, strange, beyond ordinary logic, visionary, as if a mysterious voice speaks through the narrator. In addition, these poems are based on the use of catalogue and parallel structure found in the Hebrew prophets, and so forth. The poems are essentially long lists, but unlike some of the brief imagistic or monologue poems, they have both unity of design and fullness of articulation. Each line serves as an image in the overall vision of the poem.

Two of these poems, "God's Cigar" and "Right Now," involve fathers and children. The former is a worshipful son's tribute to his mysterious father. The latter condemns America's cruel treatment of so many of its children, as spoken by a compassionate, fatherly voice.

The most difficult and problematic of these poems, "God's

Cigar" is also the most powerful and original. The poet ostensibly describes what a fire destroys of his father's possessions. The list is astonishing; it includes everything from "the socks from the thirties and forties with clocks" to "butts of pocket pencils older than mummies / and erasers like the nosenubs of pharaohs" to "your mother Bella's humor in his fur collar." But the catalogue gets harder, not easier, as the poet plays on his father's leg *brent* (Yiddish: "burnt") "after the fire" in a series of almost incomprehensible references, each of which seems to describe some aspect of his father's life in America:

leg of the second nephew of Harris Mandelbaum
 peddlar millionaire
 leg of the science scholar erased by the quota
 leg of the hundred yard olympics at McCombs park
 [p. 44]

Despite the devastation of this terrible conflagration in which he has lost almost everything, the father still has "a garbage pail to rinse and *daven* [pray] over" (p. 44). Thus, in one of the few religious references in the volume, the father, despite his losses or perhaps because of them, enacts Jewish ritual and prayer.

The father plays a dual role, for he is not only "my father my pal"; he can be seen "with his limb of drenched bandages / flying in front of buses / Without wings" (p. 45). The father is comic and absurd but also imbued with mystical powers. He lives in the poet's imagination as a source of inspiration, as a link to his Jewish past, and as a promise of prophetic power symbolized by the fire that burns away all but his visionary presence.

Judaism, then, exists for Kessler almost entirely within his imagination and is not bound by space or time. Rather than showing a hostile oedipal response to his father, the poet-son worships him as if he were a patriarch. The influence of the father figure may lead to the poet's own visions condemning human evil and seeming to demand compassion and goodness.

Nowhere is this more evident than in "Right Now," where the poet in his own fatherly, prophetic voice condemns America's mistreatment of its children. In this powerful, affecting poem, Kessler condemns cruelty and indifference. His images speak for themselves:

I see children with faces unravelling into balls of
shreds of cries.

I see children whose fathers are specks of
disappearing red dust. . . .

I see the terror at the locked school door and the
doorless school toilet.

I see shy children restrained for singing to
themselves.

I see children fire-bombed to death by the police
of Philadelphia.

[pp. 76-77]

In "Right Now," Kessler criticizes inhumanity in his own prophetic voice, which he seems to have inherited from his visionary father, who is a curious mixture of ethnic jester and visionary prophet.

Ruth Whitman

Rooted to her body, her sexuality, Ruth Whitman celebrates love and by extension the earth's holiness. Her best poems are written in simple, concrete language that is also highly suggestive:

You wake up feeling
like an oven
where bread
has just been baked.

All night the yeast rose
and at dawn
you baked the bread
a round full loaf.

[p. 68]

While the image seems clear enough, it also serves as an extended simile, beginning in line 2, for sexual experience, or so it suggests to this reader. As in so many of her poems, Whitman celebrates the richness and beauty of everyday acts. By being responsive to what she senses, the poet opens herself to sexual and spiritual possibilities.

While in "Reunion" she reveals that behind the sexual urge is the desire to be one united sex, a condition that existed "before / the pregods envied us / and split in two our one" (p. 69), in "David's Breath" she adds a biblical and mythological level to the sexual experience. The lover has

David's
mouth, pastures of
honeysuckle, the nape
of his baby
neck.

The strong sexual metaphors are reminiscent of the Song of Songs.

Under your arm
a decanter of
spices, the slope
of your torso,
newly cut wood

[p. 70]

Although she is not a bookish poet, Whitman's simple language often suggests Jewish parallels.

Touchstone,
your body is my Israel,
your shoulder my wailing
wall, your face the bible
of my wandering.

[p. 127]

For Whitman, Jewishness is an extension of her earthy, sensuous experience. In that sense she resembles the biblical poets who envisioned God in the life within and around them. If we celebrate and live life to the fullest, we might experience a fuller humanity, if not divinity, close at hand.

We can see Whitman's affinity for the Song of Songs on a large

scale in her "The Drowned Mountain," a series of fourteen poems that tells the story of a love relationship, which evolves through romantic infatuation, marriage, and divorce to a final sense of understanding and reconciliation. Like the biblical Song, "The Drowned Mountain" is an anthology of love poetry, touching several themes. The last section, "The Mating," describes the ex-wife visiting her ex-husband's grave. Here an extended metaphor of bees symbolizes the suffering and joy, the sting and honey, of the love relationship:

All our cruelties and denials
all structures of power and frustration
fall like pollen
through the early summer air,
and the simple truth appears:

a wedding, a hint of honey
in the lion's mouth.

[p. 264]

We must taste the bitter with the sweet if we are to survive and prevail; therefore, we must celebrate all of life as we experience it. This belief appears to be at the core of Whitman's faith.

In addition to her celebration of sexuality and love, Whitman also writes of the simultaneity and oneness of experience. A number of her poems dramatize the haunting connections between various life stages both within a person and between people. In "Eightythree," the poet captures many nuances of a touching, bittersweet scene in which, while a daughter washes her mother, the two subtly change roles. At the end, the mother asks, "Am I your baby?" (p. 235).

In the penultimate poem of the volume, "Old Love," an elderly married couple overlook signs of old age to focus on their once-youthful bodies. Once again, the past comes alive in the present as they "slide into each / other, young and old / wrinkled, smooth" (p. 280). The narrator of "In a Mirror," the final poem of *Laughing Gas*, sees in the mirror "the old woman / in the child, the child in the woman." It is a game she plays. Yet there is something more than gamesmanship and ironic laughter at stake here, for the nar-

rator wonders "who is this woman in my mirror?" Ultimately only "the bones" reveal "who you have been" (p. 281).

Some of Whitman's strongest poems depict scenes of Israeli life. In "A Gesture," a woman who has been touched by "Europe, war, deprivation" does not want her husband to leave her. "In Nazareth" depicts the difficult meeting between a Jewish and an Arab poet. And there are others, but perhaps the best, "In the Jerusalem Bakery," paints a picture of the woman behind the counter, surrounded by freshly baked cakes and breads, who reveals the concentration camp "numbers on her arm." The narrator tells how amid this "cheerful" setting, she tries to greet the clerk and pays for the baked goods. "Our hands / touch, our eyes meet, she almost smiles" (p. 270).

As in many of her other superb poems, Whitman shows the essentials of the experience and allows the reader to interpret. The reader senses depth of emotion and insight in Whitman's simple, sensuous language. Yet Whitman does not appear to unite her vision of love with her love of Israel. There is no synthesis leading to unification of flesh and spirit as part of a religious vision. Rather, she affirms her Jewishness as part of her acceptance of all earthly experience.

* * *

Although all four poets choose life, only Vinner writes from the Holy Land and in Hebrew, and he alone engages in dialogue with God, whom he questions yet imbues with frightening power. For the three American poets, the Hebrew God has been transformed, if not diminished, but may still exist in Milton Kessler's prophetic vision of his father, Ruth Whitman's affirmation of earthly love and life, and Howard Schwartz's quest to envision messianic redemption and unification through midrashic reimagining of texts.

We may need to approach the subject of God in American Jewish poetry not from the traditional perspective but from one in which divinity is not apart from the person but part of his or her quest to be fully human. As Buber says in *Hasidism and Modern Man*, "Man cannot approach the divine by reaching beyond the human; he can approach Him through becoming human."⁵ It is

possible that American Jewish poets such as Milton Kessler, Ruth Whitman, and Howard Schwartz are in touch with divinity in ways that are true to their chosen lives in the diaspora.

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Notes

1. Gary Pacernick, *Memory and Fire: Ten American Jewish Poets* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), pp. 6-7.
2. Gary Pacernick, *Sing a New Song: American Jewish Poets Since the Holocaust* (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1991), p. 42.
3. In *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 9, no. 2 (Fall 1990): 259.
4. Howard Schwartz, *Gates to the New City* (New York: Avon, 1983), pp. 25-26.
5. Edited and translated by Maurice Friedman (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958), pp. 42-43.

Book Reviews

Goldstein, Judith S. *Crossing Lines: Three Portraits of the Jewish-Gentile Experience*. New York: William Morrow, 1992. 320 pp.

Most books dealing with American Jewish history present an overview from the first settlement in 1654 to the present or focus on the development of a specific Jewish community. It is therefore refreshing to encounter a book which tells the story of three small communities, Bangor, Mount Desert (pronounced Dessert) Island, and Calais (pronounced Ca-lis) in a part of the country in which the Jewish population has never been very large—Maine. In *Crossing Lines*, Judith Goldstein tells us how the Jews of these communities related both to their fellow Jews and to their Gentile neighbors. In addition, her book portrays Jews as part of a larger community. Thus we are presented with a broad picture of life in these three very different communities and how the Jews in each related to what they encountered.

Bangor had a small German-Jewish synagogue from 1849 to 1856 (about which I wrote a paper for the *Archives* while a student at HUC-JIR and which receives passing mention in the footnotes). However, it was not until the early 1880s that a permanent Jewish community was established there by Jews fleeing czarist Russia and seeking new opportunities in America far removed from the large centers of Jewish settlement.

Like many Jews in other parts of the country who did not live in urban centers at that time, the Jews of Bangor started life in the New World as peddlers, slowly building their financial wherewithal, bringing other family members to these shores, and starting to climb up the economic and social ladder.

Bangor was an old, staunchly Protestant New England city. The economic and social integration of its Jews occurred very slowly. Ms. Goldstein does a fine job in describing the restrictions they encountered as well as their efforts to break through the barriers, a

process which was not completed until several decades after World War II.

I was in the Air Force, stationed in Bangor, in 1952. I remember with great affection my four months in that city, especially Rabbi Avraham Freedman and his family—delightful, outgoing people who had spent eight years in South Africa and brought to Bangor a charm which Ms. Goldstein describes most aptly. She also mentions that the Bangor Public Library contains books in Yiddish. As I recall, the library had been very well endowed by some of the city's lumber barons in years past and thus was able to purchase materials for even a small patron group. I also recollect that, unfortunately, the library's wealthy benefactors had not endowed it with funds to pay its staff or upgrade the crowded building.

By contrast, Mount Desert Island was a stronghold of Christian snobbery, which Goldstein clearly portrays. Until after World War II, the only Jews able to breach the barrier were two wealthy German Jews and their families—Jacob Schiff and Henry Morgenthau, Sr. She describes their entry into this rarified world in good detail. She also provides us with a glimpse of life among the very few immigrant Jewish merchant families in Bar Harbor, the main community on the island, of whom one couple were the grandparents of Maury Povich, the TV talk show host.

Calais, on the other hand, was an entirely different story. The Unobskey family, primarily Arthur and his mother Sarah, were leaders among the Jews of this small Down East city, to which they came in 1911. Arthur became perhaps the leading spokesman for the city, an intrepid worker for its future development. The list of his involvements on a local, state, and national level was extensive, and Ms. Goldstein presents a detailed picture of his accomplishments. Calais was open to its Jews, and its Jews, as represented by Arthur Unobskey, responded in kind. They found neither the exclusion of Bangor nor the snobbery of Mount Desert Island.

Three very different communities in one state, and Ms. Goldstein describes each with clarity and a readability that is commendable. She has extensive notes at the back of the book reflecting her thorough research, though without any indication in the text that could distract the reader's attention. There is also a

lengthy bibliography and an index.

My one disappointment was that while the book was published in 1992, there is limited information on events after about 1970. Each account just seems to peter out. Nonetheless a brief epilogue brings us to the present and helps tie the accounts together.

American Jewish history has many byways and backwaters. Judith Goldstein does an excellent job in giving us a portrait of three such communities in her very readable book.

—William J. Leffler II

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Kuzmack, Linda Gordon. *Woman's Cause: The Jewish Woman's Movement in England and the United States, 1881-1933*. Athens: Ohio State University Press, 1990. 280 pp.

Woman's Cause by Linda Gordon Kuzmack compares and contrasts Jewish feminist movements and their leaders in England and the United States between 1881 and 1933, emphasizing throughout those women whose activities directly affected the Jewish community in such areas as social reform, feminist trade unionism, women's suffrage, welfare activities, and agitation for religious change. This well-documented comparative study, based on extensive archival research in England and the United States and illustrated with photographs, is particularly important for the light it sheds on the little-explored topic of Jewish feminism in England. *Woman's Cause* is also valuable for its biographical sketches of the many vivid but now little-known personalities, both American and English, who made major contributions to the Jewish woman's movement.

Kuzmack divides her source material chronologically and thematically into seven chapters and a comprehensive conclusion; in each chapter parallel developments in England and the United States are dealt with separately. Concluding remarks, although sometimes repetitious, provide cogent summaries of the chapter's main arguments and account for differences between the English and American scenes.

Between Kuzmack's starting point in 1881, which marks the beginning of widespread Eastern European Jewish immigration to England and the United States, and 1933, both the English and American Jewish communities were transformed many times over. During this period of Jewish acculturation and accommodation to relatively benign host environments, Jewish women played a significant part in bringing about social and religious change in their own communities and beyond. *Woman's Cause* makes clear that despite the impediments of social disapproval and occasional hostility from male Jewish leaders, the Christian bias of nineteenth-century feminists, and widespread anti-immigrant sentiment, Jewish feminists of this era were a part of secular English and

American feminist organizations at the same time as they formed an effective woman's movement that was distinctively Jewish.

The early chapters of *Woman's Cause* describe Jewish women's lives in England and the United States at the end of the nineteenth century, and go on to detail their involvements in women's organizations, culminating in the founding of the National Council of Jewish Women in 1893 in the United States, and the comparable Union of Jewish Women in Great Britain in 1902. Both of these organizations, together with the Jewish Feminist Organization of Germany, struggled to improve communal social services, and worked for women's emancipation and religious equality within the Jewish community. A particular focus of these groups, which led to their participation in the secular International Council of Women, was the fight against white slavery, a significant problem in the Jewish community.

By the end of the nineteenth century, English and American Jewish women's organizations were focused on improving women's education, employment possibilities, and living conditions. Kuzmack's fourth chapter, "Settlement Reformers," concentrates on the emerging Jewish professional women, usually single, who found independence and respect as social workers, teachers, and nurses, and who directed their efforts primarily at the masses of recently arrived Eastern European immigrants. While the class differences that separated Jews of German and Eastern European origin presented some problems, the health, social, and educational services provided by the settlement houses and visiting nurse services staffed by Jewish feminist professionals played an important part in empowering some working-class women of the immigrant generation, and ultimately prepared them for leadership roles in the trade union and suffrage movements. This was particularly the case in the United States, where less rigid social barriers allowed for more fertile cross-class alliances than in England.

Kuzmack devotes her fifth chapter to women's involvement in the labor movement, discussing the upper-class Women's Trade Union League in England, which attempted to organize East End Jewish immigrant garment workers into trade unions without striking success, and the far different American situation, where

immigrant women themselves played a significant role in labor organizing and strike activity. In the Women's Trade Union League of New York, Jewish women of all classes united to support strikes, attempted to integrate women into unions, and promoted state and federal legislation benefiting workers. As Kuzmack notes; the presence of large numbers of experienced Jewish women unionists, some of whom shared leadership roles with wealthy Jewish women, "provided one wing of a new Jewish power base for the final phase of the American suffrage movement" (p. 129).

By the second decade of the twentieth century, many women had come to see attaining the franchise "as the only means of achieving equality for themselves and social reforms for working women" (p. 132). In England, where there was little cross-class cooperation before the First World War, upper-class women formed the Jewish League for Woman Suffrage in 1912, joining other, church-linked English women's groups that supported extension of the franchise. Although a distinctly Jewish suffragist organization was not deemed necessary in the American setting, where emphasis on social class was less pronounced and separation of church and state obtained, large numbers of American Jewish women of all classes were active in suffragist efforts. Still, it is indicative of the overwhelmingly powerful influence of the male communal and religious leadership that no American Jewish women's organization officially supported votes for women.

In the decade after the franchise was achieved, Jewish women's organizations returned to their social service concerns, agitating as well for Zionist causes and for religious reform. At the first Congress of the World Council of Jewish Women, held in Vienna in 1923, "Participants primarily concerned themselves with ensuring communal and religious equality, insisting that until Judaism viewed women as equal to men, women would remain susceptible to 'victimization' in all spheres of Jewish life" (p. 181). Kuzmack's account of the refusal of the lay leadership of Hebrew Union College in the 1920s and 1930s to permit the ordination of qualified female candidates, and of the many years it took before Lily Montague, the founder of Liberal Judaism in England, was awarded even lay minister status, is expressive of the long struggle

Jewish women continue to endure in their quest for religious equality. In instances such as this, *Woman's Cause* convincingly demonstrates that the Jewish feminist movement from 1881 to 1933 laid the groundwork for the resurgence of Jewish feminism in the early 1970s which has so enriched and enlivened the contemporary Jewish scene.

Women's Cause is an essential contribution to our growing understanding of the lives and experiences of Jewish women of previous eras. Many of the important female activists, social workers, labor organizers, suffragists, rabbinical students, and religious leaders Kuzmack mentions are today virtually unknown in the general Jewish community. Perhaps her book will restore them to the prominence they deserve; certainly it alerts us to the constant vigilance that Jewish women and men must exercise in preserving our collective past.

—Judith R. Baskin

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Hertzberg, Arthur. *The Jews in America: Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989.

The Jews in America by Arthur Hertzberg, perhaps the most prestigious rabbi-scholar among older New York intellectuals, is an historical jeremiad showing American Jewry the consequences of its failure to absorb the writings of its pious European forebears. Hertzberg's examples are vivid, and his logic inexorable. But can a history so singular in theme and so selective in setting teach contemporary Jewry the moral lesson its author intends? Even if the categories into which he sorts our history display a clear moral intent, do they resonate to a sense of self his audience can recognize?

Hertzberg's thesis, which he acknowledges he has borrowed from his father, the late Hasidic rabbi of Baltimore, is that American Jewry is descended from impoverished, Judaically ignorant immigrants, who came to America not in the moral guise of religious refugees, but for the same reason as Italians and Poles—to pursue “success.” Even more so than Catholic immigrants, they abandoned their religious sages to pursue an individualistic, materialistic dream. To compensate for their spiritual loss, they used voluntary associations to fabricate a “Jewish tradition” that might enhance their self-esteem. This pride reached a zenith in the 1950s and early 1960s, when over 1,000 new synagogues were built at a cost of over \$1 billion. But because the accompanying religious schools identified Judaism with ritual (all of Judaism that their founders knew), instead of seriously discussing Jewish texts and philosophy, the children never learned why being distinctively Jewish should matter. To compensate as adults for their Jewish ignorance, in the 1970s they substituted a faith in Israel or lamentations over the Holocaust as a shallow ethnic identity.

As narrative history, Hertzberg begins in New Amsterdam in 1654, and traces his theme of spiritual evasion through the early national period. The careers of prominent men like Asser Levy, Haym Solomon, Aaron Lopez, and Mordecai M. Noah are set into his critical context. Levy, for example, compared to the wealthier

Sephardic Jews who arrived as refugees in New Amsterdam, remained to assert his civic rights despite his Jewish identity. Solomon and Lopez, on the other hand, are criticized because they discouraged the immigration of Judaic scholars whose knowledge they deemed unnecessary in secular America. Noah is especially praised for his assertiveness as a Jew in the Jacksonian arena of democratic politics. He remained Orthodox in religion and messianic in his desire to establish a refuge for Jews, at a time when his friends and family were abandoning their religious faith and ethnic identity. The religious leaders of the nineteenth century, Isaac M. Wise, Isaac Leeser, even Kaufmann Kohler, are criticized for their meager scholarly acumen and, more, for their failure to resist the substitution of social adjustment for religious piety as the basis of American Jewish life. Indeed, while praising Wise's struggle to enforce the separation of Protestant Christianity from the public schools, Hertzberg notes that his congregants were discarding Jewish practice to conform in religion, language, dress, and decorum to elite gentile standards.

The bulk of the book describes how East European Jews settled into America and assumed control of the Jewish community. Again, the theme of spiritual declension and individual striving dominates the story. For example, as a moral preface, Hertzberg recalls the warnings against American materialism issued by Hasidic rabbis like Ezekiel of Shinova and Joshua of Belz to justify their refusal to come to America. He notes also the more tolerant response in the 1920s of Rabbi Chaim Hirschenson of Hoboken, an Orthodox immigrant from Palestine, who praised the remnants of transmuted piety he observed, rather than condemning his congregants for rituals they had abandoned. Against this moral penumbra Hertzberg then discusses the great psychological differences between the East European Jews and their German predecessors. The Germans, he argues, as mobile individuals, sought to adopt American ways as quickly as possible. The Russians, though adopting American work habits, still saw themselves as a "folk people." Unlike the Germans, they had believed themselves superior to the peasantry surrounding them in Europe, so they felt the need to retain some ritual observance as well as social cohesion as

the basis of their identity in America. Even as they moved to new neighborhoods they clung together, and under the aegis of Louis D. Brandeis during World War I, for the first time they interjected "Jewish interests" into American politics, as the Irish and the blacks were doing. While elevating Yom Kippur and Chanukah to ritual prominence, they rejected a leadership learned in Jewish law and lore. In its place they substituted Horace M. Kallen's secular philosophy of cultural pluralism, or its mildly religious redaction by Mordecai Kaplan, which allowed them to innovate ritually and intellectually as they chose.

The story is carried through World War II and into the 1960s by describing how the children and grandchildren of Russian Jews migrated to suburbs, where intergenerational tensions focused on an eroding ethnicity, marked especially by parental fear of intermarriage. In an argument reminiscent of Will Herberg in the 1950s, Hertzberg modulates his familiar story of generational succession with mordant comments on the spiritual emptiness, the loss of direction, that has been the price of success. It was foreshadowed in Abraham Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky*, given a disguised dramatization in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, and adumbrated by the incapacity of American Jewry to face the Holocaust for a full generation. To find moral compensation for their own ignorance, the third generation turned to a blanket defense of Israel, to the civil rights movement, and to belated memorialization of Holocaust victims—all events external to their own experience. They were subsequently rejected by blacks who wished to reclaim their own movement, and told by Israelis that those who refuse to make aliyah are not true Zionists. Without spiritual moorings, they absorbed from Lucy Dawidowicz's popular history of the Holocaust that the generic Jew must nurture his insecurities and build an identity around the fight against anti-Semitism.¹ "American Jewish history," Hertzberg concludes, "is thus the story of Jewish individuals who banded together to form communities, to express their memories, or to serve their immediate needs. The ancestors of American Jews did not come . . . to create a base for a rebirth of their religion or to become the other front for Israel. They came to succeed" (p. 385). The heroic exception has been the cluster of Hasidic rabbis, led by Joel Teitelbaum—the Satmar rebbe,

and Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn—the Lubavitcher Hasid, whose followers, alone among American Jews, know why it matters to be a Jew in the modern world. Like the early Puritans, they came to America to create an authentic religious commonwealth based on a classic Judaic canon which they teach diligently to their children in all-day schools.

As scholarly history, Hertzberg can be criticized on all too many levels. Some should be cited before one falls too easily into a counter-moralism that verges on a defense of success. First, Hertzberg ignores most of the questions raised by modern social history. In a narrative of spiritual decline, concern for a balanced account of social change becomes superfluous. He assumes that only the poorest and most Jewishly ignorant came here, rather than exploring the many oral histories available in archives around the country that demonstrate the varied class backgrounds of Jewish immigrants. Instead, he relies on old monographs that fasten on the struggles of the earliest pioneer peddlers. His field of vision rarely strays west of the Hudson, with occasional references to Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Chicago, again to cite anecdotes. Descriptions of impacted neighborhoods, apartment living, and exclusively Jewish areas of second settlement in the Bronx or Brooklyn are taken as models of Jewish living which other cities presumably replicated on a reduced scale. Given Professor Hertzberg's moral tone, one can imagine why Jewish social patterns in Western cities are ignored, despite San Francisco's 140 years of Jewish history, and the emergence of Los Angeles Jewry as the world's second-largest urban community. If social mobility is morally suspect in New York, how much more so where Jews were among the pioneers, where their fear of anti-Semitism was minimal, their move to spacious, ethnically diverse neighborhoods occurred early, and their participation in civil government and Masonic lodges was unquestioned.

As a second problem, the emphasis on ignorance of Judaic learning leads Hertzberg to equate "Jews" with Jewish men, who alone had religious standing, and to defame women when they appear in his account. Because women were denied religious instruction, Hertzberg dismisses them as "more ignorant than the men," and he depicts the wives of German-Jewish immigrants as

merely practitioners of Veblenesque "conspicuous consumption" (p. 140). In a warped Freudian paradigm, he argues that the financial failure of many Russian-Jewish men led their wives to denounce them to their sons, and to use their new power in the family to substitute their "folk religion" (Tevye's "Tradition") for authentically Jewish learning. None of the efforts by Jewish women's clubs or sisterhoods to educate immigrant women or to build religious institutions across the country is discussed.² Nor is the ability of women to sensitize the civic consciousness of their communities or to liberate themselves noticed. The moral enterprise of modern scholarship, to give voice to the inarticulate, is ignored, because the ignorant—and the secular direction they gave to many of their children—are spiritually despised.

As a third limitation, Hertzberg attributes the capacity for Jewish moral leadership exclusively to a scholarly elite, no matter how isolated they may have become from the economic and political disasters engulfing their own people. Was their own negligence not responsible for their loss of respect? He certainly sees their claim to authority, whatever the social circumstances, as superior to the rebellion of the poor. Socialism, he believes—on no evidence—had far less appeal than scholars have claimed, and communism, even in the 1930s, tapped merely a fringe. He ignores the struggle for social justice fought by the garment unions, many led by immigrant young women,³ as well as the incubator that Marxist student groups provided a whole generation of writers and critics who transformed American literary and cultural criticism in the years after World War II.

Finally, for an author who has written extensively on intellectual history, Hertzberg provides very little analysis of Jewish scholarship in America. Not only does he ignore the dilemmas faced by the rabbis who in the twentieth century founded America's seminaries,⁴ he is also uninterested in the direction Jewish scholars have given the physical and social sciences, medical and economic research, historical scholarship, and political analysis. Perhaps like Rabbi Hirschenson he should appreciate the achievements of a Jonas and Lee Salk, a Robert Oppenheimer, a Hannah Arendt or Noam Chomsky, a Sadie American or Belle Moskowitz, who in secular ways brought Jewish social justice or commitment to schol-

arship to America. He seems to have dismissed Susan Sontag's general perception of twenty-five years ago, that "The two pioneering forces of modern sensibility are Jewish moral seriousness and homosexual aestheticism and irony,"⁵ while allowing himself the luxury of aiming that seriousness against the Jews themselves.

Nevertheless, Hertzberg's hard truth remains. Most migrants to America did abandon rabbinic authority and did leave their descendants a meager Judaic legacy which only recently university scholars have tried to recover. Steven Cohen, who has attempted to demonstrate Judaism's persistence by measuring religious "behaviors," himself admits that such social-scientific methodology trivializes religion by missing its vital subjective core.⁶ As Y. H. Yerushalmi reminds us in a broader context, modern social science, with its objective evidentiary canons and its aim of balancing perspectives, not only defines a truth, but has created room for dissonance among ways of approaching truth.⁷ But is Hertzberg's particular lament his truth—a commentary on American Jewish mindlessness, or is it a misanthropic condemnation of the intellectual risks that scientific thinking and political freedom have brought to Western humanity? Hertzberg sees the moral underpinnings of "self" to depend so heavily on canonical texts that he reduces to cultural betrayal the process of multilayered identity required of any thoughtful contemporary American. Does he help us explore the postmodern context in which new choices must be made? If we should not allow the Israelis to decide for us, and if we are descended from Marx, Freud, and Horace Kallen, as well as Wise, Gordis, and Mordecai Kaplan, why should our choices be simple and our way clear? How is the tolerance on which Hasidic religious commonwealths rest to be tended without acute knowledge of the political process?⁸ Hertzberg's own call for a renaissance in Jewish learning grows as much from modernism's moral seriousness as from his regard for sacred texts. But the authority he wishes to invest in such texts cannot be squared with our birthright of intellectual freedom and with our socially variegated everyday lives.

—William Toll

William Toll has taught at Temple University and the University of Oregon at Eugene.

Notes

1. Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1975).
2. Beth Wenger, "Jewish Women of the Club: The Changing Public Role of Atlanta's Jewish Women (1870-1930)," *American Jewish History* 76, no. 3 (March 1987): 311-332; William Toll, "A Quiet Revolution: Jewish Women's Clubs and the Widening Female Sphere, 1870-1920," *American Jewish Archives* 41, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 1989): 7-26.
3. Susan A. Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl: Life and Labor in the Immigrant Generation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Elizabeth Ewen, *Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars: Life and Culture on the Lower East Side, 1890-1925* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1985).
4. Deborah D. Moore, *At Home in America: Second Generation New York Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), pp. 177-200.
5. Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Dell, 1969), p. 292.
6. Steven M. Cohen, *American Assimilation or Jewish Revival?* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp. 49-57, 16-17.
7. Yosef H. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (New York: Schocken Books, 1989), p. xxxvi, "Only in the modern era do we really find, for the first time, a Jewish historiography divorced from Jewish collective memory and, in crucial respects, thoroughly at odds with it."
8. David Vital, *The Future of the Jews* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 29, 39-41, 72-83, urges Jews in America, Europe, and Israel to study political history to be able to protect Jewish interests that alone can ensure survival. Vital's Zionist focus can be criticized, but his assessment of the consequences of Jewish emancipation generally valid.

Gartner, Lloyd P., and Jonathan D. Sarna, Edited by. *Yehudei Artsot Habrit* [The Jews of the United States]. Jerusalem: Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion and Zalman Shazar Centre for Jewish History, 1992. 434 pp.

Yehudei Artsot Habrit, edited by Lloyd Gartner and Jonathan Sarna, is a collection of nineteen articles on American Jewish history and life published originally in English and here presented in Hebrew translation. It continues a former brochure of translated articles on the same theme published several years ago by the Zalman Shazar Centre. Together with *Batfutsot*, the periodical issued by the Israeli branch of the American Jewish Committee (which also contains Hebrew translations of articles on other Jewries), it is part of an effort to offer Israeli readers the most authoritative and updated scholarly information about and interpretation of American Jewry.

Considering the wide scope of time and theme envisaged by the editors, together with the limitations of space, they have succeeded in carrying out their intention. The span of time ranges from the colonial period to the end of the present century. The themes include demography, immigration, economic history, social conditions, acculturation, political trends, Zionism, anti-Semitism, and what comes under the general title of "Jewish experience," with its diverse expressions at different times.

The two frames of reference of the volume, the thematic and the periodic, are explained in the preface. American Jewish history is divided into five periods: the older or colonial era, from the mid-seventeenth until the early nineteenth century; the German or Central European period, which roughly covers the years 1840–1880; the time of the Jewish mass immigration, or the so-called Russian period, which ended with the second Johnson Act in 1924; the interwar years, specifically 1924–1948; and the contemporary period, covering the second half of the twentieth century. The division is chronological as it is conceptual. A somewhat different division into subperiods is imaginable. Nevertheless, the approach adopted by the editors is highly professional and reflects the large body of research done in American Jewish history.

The thematic division also reflects the ideas of the editors about the major issues in the history of the Jews of the United States. Here there is a division into two parallel categories. One is the conditions which American society offered Jews: political freedom, social and religious pluralism, broad opportunities. These conditions established the framework for the adaptation of the Jewish newcomers, described in terms of options: assimilation and self-consciousness, religious tradition and change, the centralized and decentralized tendencies in Jewish organizational life.

One major theme not treated separately in the volume is the religious history of American Jewry, with its stratification in movements and tendencies. Obviously, this was a matter of decision on the part of the editors, and an understandable one. We may guess that they found it impossible to decide on one or two articles that would do justice to the complexities of the religious development and situation of American Jewry. It may well be that the matter deserves a volume by itself. This is not only due to the importance of the theme, but because of the very aim of the editors—to introduce Israelis to the history of American Jewry. There is hardly another issue in American Jewish life that interests (and challenges) Israelis more than the religious one.

Another matter that was left open is the relationship between American Jewry and Israel. The establishment of Israel was recognized by the editors as significant enough to warrant a new period in the history of the Jews in the United States: from 1948 to the present day. The reader, and again, especially the Israeli reader for whom the volume was prepared, might want to know more about the reasons for such a periodization. Probably here too it was difficult to find a satisfying article of historical character. Scholars, American as Israeli, are very much aware of the importance of the question. There is a large and growing literature, going back to the beginnings of the Jewish state, about the possible or desirable relationship between American Jews and Israel. However, one may wonder if the stage of historical summing-up has already been reached.

The almost unavoidable historical question, which clearly inspired the choice of articles and is also mentioned at the end of

the preface, refers to the specificity of the American Jewish experience. Or, as mentioned many times in present and past literature, "America is different"—and consequently different is the history of American Jewry, its present situation, its future prospects. But *is* America really different? The editors are careful in their conclusions. While mentioning the diverse possibilities, their tendency is to recognize that American Jewry has developed traits that are clearly specific. Furthermore, traits that are historically composite: a blend of Jewish characteristics and general American influences. It is the underlying thesis of the present volume that, seen from the vantage point of the late twentieth century, the specificity of American Jewry has nothing superficial about it, but represents Jewish historical creativity in the most legitimate sense. At the same time, the editors are aware of how much American Jewry is built upon old tradition and rooted in the former historical experience of the Jewish people.

This is a conclusion one tends to accept, while recognizing that, more than an answer, it leads to new questions. Considering the volume edited by Gartner and Sarna, one cannot avoid reflecting how the contemporary Jewish situation, American or otherwise, is again reshaping itself before our eyes. In the last decade of our century, the world is in flux in ways that will certainly affect Jews. Contemporary Jewry, divided into American, Israeli, and European major groups, is trying to cope with the new realities, while groping for new patterns of mutual understanding, contact, and influence. It is a changing Jewish world, which we try to comprehend as well as we can with the intellectual tools at our disposal. The selection of articles here offered—on American Jewry for the Israeli reader—is both the expression of an intellectual trend and a tool for participating in those trends. In both senses, it deserves to be seen as a very laudable effort.

—Evyatar Friesel

Evyatar Friesel is the state archivist of Israel. He is the author of nearly fifty scholarly articles; his most important publications are *The Zionist Movement in the United States, 1887–1914* (in Hebrew) and *The Atlas of Modern Jewish History*.

Yans-McLaughlin, Virginia, Edited by. *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. 342 pp.

Immigration Reconsidered by Virginia Yans-McLaughlin contains eleven essays designed to summarize recent trends in immigration studies and to help guide developments in the field. The contributors, who are historians, sociologists, and political scientists, consider the international dimensions of immigration and advocate comparative, interdisciplinary research methodologies. Although the essays focus on a wide range of immigration issues, they have common objectives, themes, and conceptual frameworks. Shunning case studies, they typically rely on aggregate data in a "search for broad explanatory models" (p. 5). As a group the authors spurn the traditional paradigm that has individual immigrants assimilating to American culture. Rejecting this emphasis on individualism, they examine "collective" behavior. The authors are also unified in their varying degrees of discomfort with the "human capital theory," which influenced many 1970s and 1980s works and stresses individual actions and assets, such as culture, language skills, and educational levels, as influencing the immigration-adaptation process. Instead they point to "structural" conditions which determined immigration patterns and affected adaptation. Chief among these are the impact of different stages of developing world capitalism, labor supply and demands, and local economic and political conditions.

The collection is divided into five sections with overlapping themes. Philip D. Curtin and Sucheng Chan provide comparative analyses that view migration to the United States in a global perspective. Curtin links slavery, coerced migration, and subsequent population movements in the "Tropical World" to expanding agricultural economies and changing labor demands. Chan aims "to counteract the tendency to dichotomize European and Asian immigrants" (p. 39). She concludes that Asian and European immigration had similar causes; both were tied to advancing world capitalism and local economic as well as political conditions.

Four essayists examine "Ethnicity and Social Structure" and focus on the adaptation process. Using different comparative methodologies, the authors investigate collective transformations, social networks, and family, ethnic group, or class strategies. The prevailing influences of expanding capitalism and labor supplies provide unifying themes. Charles Tilly's theoretical essay reflects on the role of "networks" in the immigration-adaptation process. He also synthesizes the volume's other ten essays and places them within a theoretical framework of networks and "collectivism." By examining the role that a small Irish middle class played in creating hegemonic cultures in Ireland and the United States, Kerby Miller describes the emergence of Irish nationalism and the development of Irish-American ethnic identity. Suzanne W. Model compares family strategies of American blacks and East European immigrants and finds that blacks were unable to establish the type of networks that assisted immigrants and their children to obtain jobs or advance economically. She contends that "the demands of the economy were prime movers of black family organization" (p. 280). In a geopolitical, economic analysis, Alejandro Portes argues that the causes of Hispanic immigration and the formative roots of Hispanic-American ethnic groups can be traced to the exploitive capitalistic expansion and political intervention in Latin American countries by the United States. In a separate section, Ewa Morawska's historiographical essay outlines themes prevalent in sociological and historical scholarship on immigration and ethnicity in the 1970s to the mid-1980s.

Paired together, essays by Samuel L. Baily and Virginia Yans-McLaughlin are designed to move immigration studies forward with sensitivity to interdisciplinary methodologies. Baily uses his studies of Italians in New York and Buenos Aires to develop a model for systematic cross-cultural and cross-national studies. Yans-McLaughlin treads into the ongoing debates over the use and usefulness of subjective documents. Employing interdisciplinary techniques to analyze collective biographies, she focuses on "self"—how persons viewed themselves and interpreted their actions in the past. Comparing testimony Italian and Jewish informants gave in oral interviews, Yans-McLaughlin finds that what

Italians and Jewish immigrants recall about their past "does reflect both their subjectivity and the historical realities of their cultures." She concludes that Italian and Jewish immigrants developed "different understandings of and solutions for the world around them." Jewish descriptions corresponded "with the actual history of the Jews, who, in order to survive as a people and make their way in the New World, cultivated a sense of responsibility to themselves and to others as well as an appreciation of power relationships" (p. 273). She suggests that by adopting interdisciplinary techniques, "historians and social scientists might do more with subjective documents" (p. 283).

Although they focus on the political maneuvering that led to the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, Lawrence H. Fuchs and Artstide R. Zolberg adhere to the collection's conceptual schemes. Both consider how labor supply and recruitment affected moves to restrict immigration. Beginning with statements by Frederick Douglass in 1853, Fuchs traces the changing attitudes of blacks toward immigration restriction. Zolberg argues that debates over reform legislation created "odd-couple" alignments that drew together groups with distinct concerns and at opposite ends of the political spectrum.

Immigration Reconsidered is not for the casual reader. Despite attempts to summarize scholarship, the essays assume a basic knowledge of scholarly debates and the relevant methodologies, theories, and esoteric vocabularies of disciplines engaged in immigration studies. The work, however, will appeal to scholars considering comparative or interdisciplinary research. The reliance on secondary literature means that the book provides little new information; with few exceptions, works published after 1986 are excluded. Nevertheless, the comparative essays place the secondary literature within new and even provocative interpretations. Yans-McLaughlin's comparative analysis stands out as a work that incorporates secondary sources, primary research, and interdisciplinary methodology while remaining sensitive both to cultural and structural determinants. Readers interested in comparative analyses, oral history, or Jewish or Italian immigration may quibble with her interpretation or methods, but they cannot ignore her findings.

While the essays examine a wide range of topics, the collection does have a coherent framework. But it smacks of determinism—a criticism not unanticipated by the editor. Even readers sympathetic to structural analyses and who recognize that expanding capitalism and changing local economies influenced the migration process will feel compelled to ask for more sensitivity to cultural factors. Bent on analyzing structures, most of the authors also ignore social attitudes that buttressed social structures. The essays by Miller and Yans-McLaughlin, however, stand out as attempts to consider cultural determinants within structural analyses, and Morawska discusses works that examine how groups “played within structures.” Collectively the authors make persuasive arguments that the methodologies, theories, and findings of social scientists and historians should converge, and they offer innovative ways to achieve this. Nevertheless, the collection also stands as a caution that a zeal to merge methodologies, create models, and investigate structural determinants can reduce real human experiences to intellectual constructs.

—June Granatir Alexander

June Granatir Alexander is Adjunct Assistant Professor in Russian and East European Studies at the University of Cincinnati. She is the author of *The Immigrant Church and Community: Pittsburgh's Slovak Catholics and Lutherans, 1880–1915* (1987).

Ziff, Joel, Edited by. *Lev Tuviah: On the Life and Work of Rabbi Tobias Geffen*. Newton, Mass.: Rabbi Tobias Geffen Memorial Fund, 1988. 244 pp. (English sec.), 61 pp. (Hebrew sec.).

The Lithuanian city of Kovno and its suburb of Slobodka constituted a remarkable economic and intellectual environment during the nineteenth century. Amidst relative prosperity and at a critical geographic crossroads between east and west, the Jewish population of the area debated Hasidism and the Haskalah (enlightenment), socialism and musar (the study of ethics), and whether to join the rejectionist Agudath Israel or the Zionist Mizrachi. High in the pantheon of leadership loomed Rabbi Israel Salanter, the foremost expositor of musar, and Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Spector, exemplar of tradition with a practical bent and sponsor of benevolent enterprises. Spector and Salanter fostered yeshivot and *kollelim* (houses of advanced study for married students) which nurtured their individual pedagogical approaches. Their impact and the substantial influence of the progeny of Kovno-Slobodka on American and world Jewry have not yet been adequately plotted.

As ably analyzed by Sara Geffen in the only scholarly chapter in *Lev Tuviah*, the volume under review, and expanded upon by Dov Levin in the Hebrew section, Rabbi Tobias Geffen (1870–1970) was a product of this milieu. Spector performed Geffen's *b'rit milah* (circumcision) and served as his model. His life, first depicted in an autobiography (1951), has elsewhere been described by his grandson David Geffen¹ and by Nathan Kaganoff,² and is retold here by David Geffen in Hebrew and by his father, Louis Geffen, in English.

Tobias Geffen was born into what might be described as a middle-class family. His father, a yeshiva-educated scholar who worked as a lumber merchant, married the daughter of a rabbi. Tobias absorbed Talmud and other learning at various yeshivot and, after his marriage in 1898 to Sara Hene Rabinowitz, also a rabbi's daughter, at the Kovno *kollel*. Made fearful by the pogrom of 1903, he took his wife and two young children to New York, where he worked in a sweatshop for his wife's half-brothers.

Prior to his departure from Kovno Geffen had received *smicha*

(ordination) from two traditionalist opponents of musar, Tzvi Hirsch Rabinowitz and Moshe Danishevsky. Unhappy in business, he was able to obtain a rabbinic post in one of New York's numerous *landsleit* shuls. With a growing family (there were ultimately eight children) living in a tenement, Geffen readily agreed to relinquish this position and become a traveling fundraiser for Rabinowitz's Perushim *kollel*. He so impressed his auditors in Canton, Ohio, that they asked him to remain as their rabbi. In this post Geffen improved the local educational system, trained students in his yeshiva, supervised kosher butchers, mended fences between neighboring Orthodox congregations, and wrote learned articles that were published in a Jerusalem monthly.

Disliking the cold Ohio climate, Geffen responded to an advertisement placed by Congregation Shearith Israel in Atlanta, Georgia. He became the congregation's spiritual leader in 1911, was awarded emeritus status in 1957, and continued to serve until his death sixty years after he first joined Shearith Israel. During his Atlanta years Rabbi Geffen organized a Hebrew school and served on the boards of various Jewish charities, participated in the creation of the Jewish Welfare Fund, organized a Mizrachi chapter and ardently supported Zionism, and was even called upon by the head of the public schools to oppose the Ku Klux Klan. He was also elected to the national board of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis and, somewhat surprisingly, to the executive committee of the Rabbinical Council of America (the latter was composed largely of American-trained rabbis and he never gave a sermon in English).

As this summary indicates, Geffen had an active and important career, but it was not necessarily a career that reflected his priorities. Moreover, beyond the not-insignificant accomplishment of raising funds for overseas relief, there is no record of his having a substantial impact in any of the organizations with which he was associated. Geffen seems to have felt far more comfortable in the role of East European rabbi. Thus he placed emphasis upon supervising kashrut (he recommended an alteration in the Coca-Cola formula, making it kosher for daily and Passover use), leading daily study sessions, giving sermons relating talmudic discourses to life, and answering legal inquiries. He wrote several books and

numerous articles in the European rabbinic tradition and achieved recognition as a talmudic scholar. Like Rabbi Spector, his was a personal rabbinate. He provided yeshiva training for over a dozen students (including several of his sons and Gershom and Moses Hadas), interceded on behalf of Jewish prisoners in the state penitentiaries, entertained Jewish soldiers in his home on holidays, and adjudicated disputes amongst his congregants. Because of the paucity of Orthodox rabbis in the South, he served as a regional authority purchasing wine, as well as *lulavim* and *esrogim* for Sukkot, overseeing the interstate shipment of kosher meat, granting *gets* (Jewish divorces), and aiding abandoned wives. In these areas and in his desire for peace and harmony in traditional Judaism, Geffen's mission reflected that of two fellow rabbis from Kovno, Eliezer Silver and Bernard L. Levinthal.³

Our best model for placing Orthodox rabbis is the one provided by Jeffrey S. Gurock.⁴ Mirroring Jonathan Sarna, Gurock posited a spectrum of adjustment from "resisters" to "accommodators." Clearly Tobias Geffen fit closer to the former. Unfortunately for him and his program, his position was anachronistic as early as the late 1920s. In competition with an acculturating neighboring congregation and its Americanized spiritual leader, also a product of Kovno-Slobodka, Rabbi Harry H. Epstein, Geffen rapidly declined in power, and his synagogue's membership dropped. Although assuming the role of southern Orthodox authority, Rabbi Geffen maintained a precarious existence even within his own congregation (which ultimately introduced separate seating) based upon his positive personality, spirituality, erudition, and longevity.

Lev Tuviah ("The Heart of Tobias") is a volume of devotion and love privately printed by family and friends and complemented with a beautifully reproduced family tree. Edited by a grandson and written by children, grandchildren, and a great-nephew, it has excerpts from a diary, the catalogue of the 75,000-item Geffen Collection housed at the American Jewish Historical Society, and bibliographies of the rabbi's writings and of secondary sources touching on his life. With consideration for his dedication to Hebrew, a section of the book appears in that language and, besides two articles, includes sermons, lessons, and an ethical will,

translations of which appear in the English section. Since this book is uncritical and generally ahistorical, scholars able to afford it will have to find their own meaning in the primary materials provided herein.

—Mark K. Bauman

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Notes

1. In *Dictionary of Georgia Biography*, ed. Kenneth Coleman and Steve Gurr (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983), and *Atlanta Historical Journal* 23 (Fall 1979): 85–90.
2. In *American Jewish History* 73 (September 1983): 56–60.
3. On Silver, see Aaron Rakeffet-Rothkoff's excellent *The Silver Era in American Jewish Orthodoxy* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1981); on Levinthal, see Alex J. Goldman's *Giants of Faith: Great American Rabbis* (New York: Citadel Press, 1964).
4. See his "Resisters and Accommodators: Varieties of Orthodox Rabbis in America, 1886–1983," *American Jewish Archives* 35, no. 2 (November 1983): 100–187.

Ariel, Yaakov. *On Behalf of Israel: American Fundamentalist Attitudes Toward Jews, Judaism, and Zionism, 1865–1945*. Chicago Studies in the History of American Religion. New York: Carlson Publishing, 1991. 172 pp.

It is a well-known fact that American Protestants have for many years had a special and close relationship with the Zionist movement and the State of Israel. Indeed, no one can understand U.S. foreign policy in respect to the Middle East, especially when Israel is the focus, without having to deal with the unconditional support American evangelicals extend to the Jewish state. It is less known, however, how much this deep pro-Zionist and pro-Israel attitude among Protestants in America, especially among fundamentalists, is based upon a coherent and well-defined eschatological and apocalyptic system of thought in which the return of the Jews to Palestine and the establishment of the State of Israel are regarded as an essential and necessary stage in providential history before Christ's Second Coming and his millennial rule with his saints upon earth.

Dr. Yaakov Ariel's pioneering and important book, *On Behalf of Israel*, describes with great expertise and in a fascinating way the ideological origins, religious and eschatological, that lie behind the deeply supportive attitudes of American Protestants toward Jews, Judaism, and Israel, and eloquently illuminates the unique role American fundamentalists have assigned to the Jewish people in God's plan of salvation and redemption for the human race. In this highly original and most interesting historical study, Dr. Ariel authoritatively shows how Protestants' modes of conviction shape their modes of action, or how modes of religious persuasion strongly inform social and political action toward the Jews by American fundamentalists. No student of Protestantism in America or of Zionism can afford to ignore this highly important work.

The special interest American Protestants have in the Jews developed during the second half of the nineteenth century and has continued strongly since then. Already in 1881 a group of fundamentalists led by Horatio G. Spafford established an American

colony in Jerusalem. Ten years later, William E. Blackstone sent a petition, signed by 413 eminent Americans, to President Benjamin Harrison, asking him to take steps that would lead to the restoration of Palestine to the Jews. Another appeal by the Chicago Methodist Preachers Meeting was sent to President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903, calling on him to address the issue of the Jews' right to a home in Palestine. This was also the theme of a memorial sent by American evangelicals to President Woodrow Wilson in 1916, asking him to consider the idea of a Jewish national home in Palestine. In the face of the constant and persistent hostility of Christians toward Jews for many centuries, one rightly wonders why a group of American fundamentalists would go to such pains to advocate the restoration of Palestine to the Jews, and why they so strongly favored the idea of Israel as the Jewish national home. And in our own time, why have such famous American Protestant preachers as Billy Graham, Jerry Falwell, and Pat Robertson, to name only a few, identified themselves so enthusiastically with the fate of the Jewish people and the State of Israel?

In order to explain this important historical phenomenon, Ariel closely examines various leading figures and organizations in the fundamentalist movement. And the outcome leads us into the fascinating realm of the complex relationship between sacred revelation and history.

The relationship between prophecy and history, or between prophetic revelation and time, has constituted the core and the heart of Christianity from its very beginnings. Eschatological expectations and apocalyptic visions characterized Christ's message. His disciples carried these prophetic messages to the gentiles, and later they were embodied in the teachings of the church. Hence the eschatological and apocalyptic dimension of time has been an essential feature of the life of the mind of Christians for many centuries and has strongly determined their actions within history.

Matters touching upon the relationship between prophecy and history obviously have far-reaching consequences in the ultimate goal of God's plan of salvation and redemption for humanity. Only recently, however, have historians attempted to explore seriously

the close association between these modes of conviction and social and political action. Here lies one of the greatest merits of *On Behalf of Israel*.

The most important and original contribution of Ariel's study is, without doubt, the finding that during the nineteenth century there arose among American Protestants a unique apocalyptic mode of historical thought. Ariel argues in a most convincing way that the new Protestant attitude toward the Jews, Judaism, and Zionism was rooted in a new eschatological theory, or a new apocalyptic vision of history, known as Dispensationalism. Adherents of this theory believe that God deals with fallen humanity upon earth in a series of successive "dispensations," and that the whole course of sacred, providential history is divided into several ages in which God reveals His plan of salvation and redemption for humanity. Seeing history as an economy of salvation, dispensationalists therefore believe that God has a different plan for humanity in each dispensation, or age. More particularly, they believe that Christ's Second Coming should occur very soon, perhaps even right now, though one does not know for sure.

This unique ideology of sacred history is based upon millennial expectations, namely, the belief that at the end of time and history Christ will return and establish his kingdom upon earth. Millennialism, of course, has constituted a central theme in the Christian ideology of history for many centuries. Yet, as Ariel makes clear, dispensationalists differ radically from previous millennialist movements in claiming that the eschatological happenings have not yet begun in history, though the present age, hence the term "dispensationalism," is terminating and therefore the eschatological events leading to the millennium are to start very soon.

In this eschatological scenario, the uniqueness of the dispensationalists lies in the crucial role they assign to the Jews in the history of salvation. They clearly advocate the centrality of the nation of Israel for Christ's Second Coming. And they not only recognize the Jewish people to be God's chosen nation, but also assert that this elect nation is destined to fulfill a decisive role in eschatological times.

The importance of dispensationalism lies in the fact that it assigns to the Jews the utmost role with regard to the fulfillment of prophetic revelations taking place before Christ's Second Coming. In this way it makes the fate of the Jewish nation inextricable from the drama of human salvation and redemption. Furthermore, in contrast to earlier traditional millennial movements which saw the church as the New Israel, dispensationalists do not abolish, but rather have reestablished, the Jews' singular role in providential history. Accordingly, they argue that the Jews will return to Israel and rebuild the Temple there. After that the Antichrist will appear and rule the Jewish state. Later on Christ will come and defeat the Antichrist, and the millennium will begin with Jerusalem as the capital of the world. The Jews will convert to Christianity and be transformed into an evangelizing nation. It is this close association between the millennium and the Jews that makes dispensationalism so attentive to the fate of the Jewish people. Thus the rise of the Zionist movement with its ultimate goal of restoring Jewish life and rule in Israel was naturally seen by dispensationalists as the starting point for the fulfillment of their eschatological and apocalyptic views.

Dispensationalism differs in a revolutionary way from previous millennial movements in the history of Christianity. Dr. Ariel rightly argues that by identifying the Antichrist with a Jewish ruler, dispensationalists broke away from the traditional Protestant identification of the Antichrist with the pope of Rome. On the other hand, by recognizing the earthly Jerusalem and the land of Israel as the actual scene where the messianic events would take place, they saw Israel as the locus of their eschatological expectations. In this way, of course, dispensationalists explicitly and consistently assigned the utmost importance to the Jewish people in the course of salvation history. Indeed, seldom before in the history of Christianity has a movement assigned so much importance to the Jews and to the prospect of their return to their land. Yet, it should be recognized that as a people who believe in the imminent Second Coming of Christ, the dispensationalists see in the return of the Jews to Israel only a necessary stage in the unfolding mystery of salvation. And thus, as Ariel explains, their concern for Israel is

more practical, since Israel is the necessary instrumental vehicle for the advancement of the millennium.

Yaakov Ariel's important book will prove indispensable not only to intellectual historians, but also to those interested in the origins of the close and strong ties which have for many years characterized the relationship between American fundamentalists and the Zionist movement, and between the United States of America and the State of Israel.

. —Avihu Zakai

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Pfaff, Daniel W. *Joseph Pulitzer II and the "Post-Dispatch": A Newspaperman's Life*. University Park: Penn State Press, 1991. xviii, 455 pp.

Historians and biographers have long been captivated by the life of Joseph Pulitzer, Sr., for he ranks with the likes of the Hearsts, Bingham, McCormacks, and Luces in journalistic acumen. The son of Hungarian Jews, Pulitzer Sr. left home at the age of seventeen in search of military adventure. However, because of poor eyesight, he was rejected by the armed forces of Austria, France, and Great Britain. A United States recruiter in Hamburg, Germany, enlisted him to fight with the Union Army in the Civil War. After completing a short stint, Pulitzer settled in St. Louis and worked as a laborer.

In 1868, Pulitzer became a reporter for the *Westliche Post*, a German-language newspaper in St. Louis. The following year, running as a Republican, he was elected to the Missouri House of Representatives. Three years later, he became a Democrat and severed his connections with the *Westliche Post*, a newspaper with Republican leanings.

In 1878, Pulitzer purchased the *St. Louis Dispatch* and the *St. Louis Evening Post*, combining the two papers into the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. In 1883, he purchased the dying *New York World* and transformed it into a vigorous, crusading publication with the largest circulation in the nation. The *World* was one of the first papers to use color comics and the sensationalism that gave rise to the term "yellow journalism."

In his old age, Pulitzer's eyesight was so dim that he had to have the newspapers read to him. He was hypersensitive to noise and suffered from a great number of illnesses, some real and some imagined. When he died in 1911, Pulitzer left \$2 million to establish a graduate school of journalism at Columbia University, and the Pulitzer Prizes were created with part of this money.

Pulitzer Sr. has long been a subject of scholarly interest, but although Joseph Pulitzer II, the second-born of his three sons, led one of the world's great newspapers for forty-three years, no biog-

rapher found his life worthy of study until Daniel W. Pfaff's *Joseph Pulitzer II and the "Post-Dispatch"*. Pfaff, associate professor of journalism and associate dean in the School of Communications at the Pennsylvania State University, has used memos, letters, and interviews to craft a very interesting portrait of Pulitzer II as a journalist. However, since Pulitzer II's life was so intrinsically interwoven with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, this is also a history of that paper.

Pfaff carefully explains why Pulitzer II's life has been so overlooked by biographers. He maintains that there was nothing in Joseph Pulitzer II's early years to suggest that he would make any kind of impact on U.S. journalism. In fact, the author contends that Pulitzer began his career as "the heir unapparent." Pfaff explains that for years, Pulitzer II was known only as the fun-loving, uncompromising middle son of the Joseph Pulitzer of the history books.

In 1893, Pulitzer II was enrolled at St. Mark's Preparatory School in Southborough, Massachusetts. St. Mark's was an exclusive and fashionable school with an Episcopalian affiliation. It was here that young Pulitzer had his initial encounter with anti-Semitism. Some of the boys began calling him "sheeny." It was his first realization of his Jewish ancestry and caught him completely by surprise. The headmaster assured Pulitzer that the incidents would stop, and his mother told him that there was nothing to be ashamed of because the Jews were a great people. Years later, Joseph Pulitzer II encountered prejudice against Jews once again in the form of anti-Semitic coolness toward him at his country club.

Pulitzer II's career at St. Mark's came to an abrupt end when he was expelled from the school at the age of sixteen. After a night of beer drinking, he had returned to the locked school complex and attempted to enter what he thought was his room. Instead, he landed in the bedroom of the headmaster and his wife.

Pulitzer II made it into Harvard because of his name and his promise to work hard. However, his father, exasperated by his low marks and penchant for skipping classes, yanked him from Harvard. For many years thereafter it was assumed that Pulitzer II had been "educated at St. Mark's and Harvard." In 1940, he candidly told one of his editorial writers, "I was expelled from St.

Mark's School." He went on to explain that his expulsion from Harvard was executed by his father, who had taken him by the seat of his pants in the middle of his sophomore year and sent him, an effete Eastern youth, into the hinterland of Missouri. "It was," added Pulitzer, "the best thing he ever did for me."

Before he went to Missouri, Pulitzer II apprenticed in the city room of the *New York World*. To the surprise of his father, the college dropout thrived there. In addition, he discovered that the newspaper business was the most interesting business one could enter. He told his father, "It doesn't seem like work at all; at any rate, not like my idea of work."

For all of his brilliance, Joseph Sr. made two major errors in judgment. First, he considered his two other sons, Ralph (the eldest) and Herbert (the youngest), the successors to his newspaper empire. They were not. Second, he was certain that the *World* would be his legacy and that the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* would play a secondary role in the scheme of things. The *World*, under the direction of Ralph, died in 1931 due to poor management and the Depression. Meanwhile, much to his delight, Joseph II was sent to St. Louis, where he devoted his time to news and editorial projects and administration. When his father died two years later, Joseph II, at the age of twenty-six, became both publisher and editor of the *Post-Dispatch*.

Pfaff chronicles the next four decades, during which the *Post-Dispatch*, under Pulitzer's leadership, grew into one of the country's most respected and liberal newspapers, winning more than a dozen Pulitzer Prizes. The author also documents how dedicated Joseph Pulitzer II was to maintaining the staunch independence of his paper, even though at times its editorial philosophy ran counter to that of his country club friends.

Although Pfaff admires his subject, his treatment of him is fair and unbiased. He credits Pulitzer II with taking a provincial newspaper and lifting it to greatness. According to Pfaff, this was accomplished not by flamboyance, but by quiet behind-the-scenes leadership wherein Pulitzer chose his editors carefully and, with some restraints, allowed them free rein. Pfaff credits Pulitzer's success at the *Post-Dispatch* to three factors. First, when Joseph

Pulitzer II became editor and publisher in 1911, the newspaper already had established a record of financial success. Second, the managers he inherited were experienced, capable, loyal, and forward-looking. And their successors were of the same mold. Third, Pulitzer was a competent businessman in his own right. He was aware of and interested in all phases of his work.

On one hand, Pfaff is quick to point out that in some areas Pulitzer II was "a man of his time." For example, during his tenure with the *Post-Dispatch*, women reporters were confined to the "society pages" and the paper had only one African-American reporter.

However, Pfaff also indicates that in other areas Pulitzer was a trailblazer. His paper never hesitated to defend the rights of ordinary citizens against both governmental and corporate abuses. In addition, the *Post-Dispatch* was quite progressive in the area of civil rights.

Finally, Joseph Pulitzer II, like his father, believed that one of the most legitimate ways to make money and at the same time maintain one's ideals was to stay technologically current. His most forward-looking business decision was to enter broadcasting. When he saw his first flickering television show through his failing eyes in 1947, he concluded, "That's the end of radio." By 1990, the Pulitzer Publishing Company owned seven television and two radio stations, accounting for 62 percent of the company's cash flow versus 38 percent for its three daily newspapers.

Pfaff has an interesting story to tell and tells it well. This is not an authorized biography, although the family did cooperate with the author's efforts. It is, however, an important chapter in journalism history.

—Burton A. Boxerman

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Michael J. Cohen. *Truman and Israel*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990. xiv, 342 pp.

Bruno Bettelheim, among others, refers to the story of the Nazi concentration camp officer who, without thinking, scraped the mud off his boots on entering a certain prison barracks. In a short time, the inmates had identified him as a "friend," secretly in sympathy with them, and a veritable mythology was born all because of his unconscious action. So desperate, conclude Bettelheim, is the basic human need to feel that one is not utterly alone and powerless.

It took the American Jewish community many years to understand that Franklin Roosevelt, looked to as their champion and their best friend, was in the end neither their champion nor their best friend. Have Jewish historians also mythologized Harry Truman? Is that honest, blunt battler of 1946–1948, the defender of Zionism against the British and against his own Department of State regulars, also a myth, born of human need?

This superb, thoughtful book is an unexcelled examination of Truman's motives and actions with regard to the birth of Israel. Cohen begins with a clear analysis of the background out of which Truman came, the American Midwest of his formative years, a culture whose snobbery and bigotry echoed in his private conversations and writings throughout his presidency. Cohen establishes that racism and anti-Semitism were common in the Missouri atmosphere, and raises the question of how Truman escaped them, if indeed he ever did (p 4).

It is an easily overdone argument. One could find in America in that period a congeries of racist and anti-Semitic cultures, East and Midwest, North and South after their different fashions. Carefully Cohen probes how deeply these factors influenced Truman, but without comparative norms, which do not exist, Cohen can only wind up suggesting that Truman was able to rise above some of the limitations of his prejudices because of a rare moral and religious set of values. Truman was a dedicated scripture reader and quoter and probably believer, coming out of a community that

took religious matters very seriously. In the end, it made a difference.¹

Through exhaustive research, Cohen demonstrates that in most of the 1946–1948 period, the American Jews were their own worst enemies. Confused, locked in power battles, constantly passing mixed if not contradictory messages to the government, they gave their British and State Department opposition the very weapons that were used against them. That opposition was primarily motivated by a dread of the Soviets that began to border on hysteria, rather than by anti-Semitism.² The result, for the Zionists, was the same. How did Truman escape the influence of his Foreign Service?

First, he did not come to the White House via the Eastern Establishment carriage route, Groton-Harvard, as did Roosevelt. The “striped-pants boys” of the State Department were not his social cronies, Cohen shows. He was far more comfortable with his White House staffers, well organized as they were along efficient, military lines of command under Truman’s captaincy.³

In that organization, several people played extraordinary roles in advancing Zionist ideals. Clark Clifford, Truman’s chief of staff and counsel to the president, had the job of executive officer, which carried him into every area of presidential activity. Under Clifford, David Niles served as special advisor on minority affairs, including Jewish affairs. Both men worked closely with the Zionists, and transmitted to Truman their own conviction that morality and integrity demanded honoring historic promises to the Jews. That, and not cynical realpolitik, would determine for Harry Truman what was really in the American national interest.

Increasingly, Truman was shown that there was a very substantial community of voters and financial contributors, by no means all Jewish, who were passionately concerned for Zionism. These people, Cohen demonstrates, were directly responsible for financing Truman’s famous “Whistle Stop” campaign among many other Democratic campaigns, and without their votes, as many Gentile Democratic Party bosses said plainly to Truman, most of the big cities would have been lost to the Republicans.⁴ But Truman, says Cohen convincingly, would never have supported

Zionism for votes or money had he not believed in its rightness. He was simply too stubborn for that (p. 280).

The Zionists had a winning team in Rabbis Stephen S. Wise and Abba Hillel Silver. They developed to perfection—independently, without collusion—what amounted to a strategy of “good cop / bad cop.” They presented Truman with the ever-furious, threatening young desk-pounder who believed that it was sometimes the height of statesmanship to be unstatesmanlike, followed by the gentle sage, the kindly old rabbi who breathed peace and understanding.

Cohen shows Truman to be a man who cherished loyalties. His Kansas City friends, Eddie Jacobson among them, were precious to him, and like his old Army buddies from Company D, had easy access to him at the White House. Together with these influential friends, the most important pro-Zionist influences on the president included Jacobson’s friend Abe Granoff and Abe Fineberg, whose financial support to him in his hour of need Truman never forgot. Fineberg, indeed, enjoyed unlimited access to Truman after November 1948 (pp. 69–73).

One of the most influential of Truman’s friends and financial backers, self-effacing to the point of actual self-concealment, was Max Lowenthal, the brilliant attorney who first met Truman on the Railroad Commission in 1936. Lowenthal became, partly through David Niles’s influence, the man who drafted Truman’s Palestine policy after 1946 (p. 78).

Lowenthal’s private papers and diaries are revealed here for the first time, and in Cohen’s able hands they provide insight into Truman’s thinking and motives far beyond what has been hitherto available. When Clark Clifford decisively destroyed the arguments of the State Department regulars in confrontations in the Oval Office and showed Truman the errors of their thinking, the briefs he used and the policy analyses he proposed were generally the unsung work of Lowenthal. State never knew.

The anti-Zionists, Cohen shows, were also not without resources. The oil companies especially the Aramco group, commonly employed ex-State Department people and socialized intimately with that community. They provided not only briefs but

occasionally produced, when it seemed useful to them, direct communications by Arab governments. Their views were very well represented by the State Department regulars, a group that Cohen describes with some understatement as "homogeneous." Cohen does not deal with the very considerable anti-Zionist influence of American Christian missionaries connected with Arab lands, or whose groups held large land and property holdings in Arab countries. Cohen does, however, devote a good deal of attention to the Department of State's attempts to show, citing the American Council for Judaism and the American Jewish Committee under Judge Joseph Proskauer, that American Jews were divided over Zionism. The White House was far too well informed to be taken in by that manoeuver, however (pp. 94-96, 102-103).

It is on the Anglo American Committee of Inquiry (AACI) that Cohen believes Truman finally came to focus his thinking. This group, the first international committee to survey the whole Palestine problem and the Jewish refugee situation, was the immediate forerunner to UNSCOP, which in 1947 recommended partition to the United Nations. The AACI in 1946 presented Truman a balanced recommendation that the 100,000 Jews languishing in the European displaced-person camps be admitted to Palestine immediately, but that there be Jewish state. Truman agreed.

Truman, and this is the critical point that Cohen correctly underlines, was never trying to set up a Jewish state. Truman was a "refugee Zionist," seeking a way to save the Jewish refugees, not a "Jewish-state Zionist." The Zionists, of course, did their best to blur this distinction, and in time very largely succeeded.

Indeed, even if they had failed, how much difference would it have made? Once, in a private discussion about the Yishuv, Howard Morley Sachar made this point: how long could Britain continue to deny an existing nation its nationhood? Israel was by 1946 already a state in everything but name.

In any case, the 1946 AACI report led to the creation of the Morrison-Grady Commission, set up by Bevin and Truman supposedly to carry out the AACI recommendations. But Grady, a career diplomat of great prestige, and one who enjoyed particular favor in Truman's eyes, came back from London with a pointless

and impossible British proposal which both rejected the AACI suggestions and defeated Truman's own public charge to Grady.

It was in fact an old, repudiated British Foreign Office scheme called the Provincial Autonomy Plan,⁵ under which, Arabs and Zionists furiously agreed, Britain stood to come back and run Palestine indefinitely. It was acceptable to no one, and a considerable puzzle remains as to why Grady brought it back at all. Although members of his own committee filed serious protests and even charges against him, Grady was thereafter highly rewarded by Truman personally for a failure that would have put paid to anyone else's career. Why? Was Grady sent to London to fail? Grady's cautious memoirs and his even more cautious book—never published—give no clue.

This problem does not engage Cohen, who seems to think the Grady report was only a logical extension or a minor "revision" of the AACI recommendations (p. 150).

In any case, Truman had a lot to worry about apart from the Palestine issue. His vacillations on the Zionist promises of the Democratic Party had to do in part with the influence of his White House staff and his friends opposing his experts at State, but it also must be understood that the problem to which Truman was sincerely sympathetic was the humanitarian one of how to settle the 100,000 Jewish refugees, not the political problem of how to establish a Jewish state. To the Zionists, the two problems were one and the same, because the state was the only workable solution to the refugee problem. Even persons who were not particularly known for their fondness towards Jews could agree that, if the alternative was 100,000 more Jews in New York, they were all for a Zionist state in the Near East.⁶

As the matter of partition, that is, the formal creation of a Jewish state, came to a U.N. vote, Jacobson and Granoff redoubled their efforts to convince Truman that the right thing to do was to back partition, and with the help of Clifford, Niles, and Lowenthal, they succeeded. By now the Department of State was not merely analyzing and advising; it had adopted a set of wishes, a point of view, which it advocated with unprofessional passion and heat. Cohen holds that many of the regulars at the Department of State were by

now not merely carrying out foreign policy, but had come to conceive of their proper mission as making that policy (pp. 168–172).⁷ After November 1947, against the fervent wishes of his State Department advisors, Truman set in motion a series of decisive, international interventions that directly resulted in the U.N. vote in favor of partition and the new state (p. 163).

The Jewish state was always only instrumental to Truman, a mere way of getting his goal achieved. It required constant pressure to prevent him from retreating from partition, especially when the Near East promptly erupted in warfare after the U.N. adopted partition. Partly in response to the threat of America becoming inveigled in a foreign war, forces at State joined the British in advocating a renewed trusteeship for Palestine, presumably to be administered by Britain (p. 714). Trusteeship, as Clark Clifford convinced Truman, using Lowenthal's arguments, was acceptable to neither Jews nor Arabs. It would have to be imposed by force, and therefore would be the surest way to guarantee American involvement in a hostile military action. It was Clark Clifford—and Lowenthal behind him—who finally secured Truman's recognition of the Jewish state by showing him that, contrary to the State Department view, it was the only reasonable and right alternative.

The State Department, Cohen concludes, never was able to see the larger picture, to appreciate that American foreign policy had something to do with the wishes of Americans, and that the virtually unanimous views of the American press, political leadership, and interested citizenry were a legitimate consideration for a democratic political leader. The State Department considered that American national interests in the Near East, which had something to do with corporate business interests, and which had a great deal to do with the Soviets, had nothing to do with what the majority of concerned Americans sought or desired. That latter they contemptuously dismissed as mere domestic politics.

Cohen discusses the subsequent plan of U.N. mediator Count Folke Bernadotte, who began by trying to make peace between Jews and Arabs, but was rapidly subverted by British and later State Department pressures into advocating a British plan to make

the Israelis give up the Negev if they meant to keep the Galilee. The plan was falsely passed off as Bernadotte's own.⁹ The advantage of the plan, whose true origins and advocates were kept a deep secret, was that it favored British Arab client states and opened the way for the British to come back and retain a military foothold in the Near East. However, when Whitehall originally advocated this plan, it was advocated as usual with no regard to the wishes of Arabs and Jews, both of whom repudiated it. Thus, the "Bernadotte" plan, like the U.N. trusteeship plan before it, would need to be enforced by arms, and Truman had no interest in committing U.S. troops in that way.

Cohen argues that this refusal on Truman's part gave Israel's army the time to create new facts in the Near East in October and November 1948. It was, maintains Cohen, the Israeli successes on the battlefield that finally convinced Truman, and the Department of State in a rather a commendably short time as well, that Israel was not an embarrassment or a mere humanitarian incumbrance but rather an asset, of extreme value to America (p. 259). By early 1949, even Under Secretary of State Lovett was arguing to the British that the best way to secure British and American strategic requirements in the Near East was to win over the Israelis, and not to alienate them (p. 271).¹⁰ Truman could rest happy with his achievements, vindicated by Israeli arms, and secure in the knowledge that he had done the right thing.

One problem remains, with which Cohen does not deal: according to official Department of State and British Foreign Office records, there was never any doubt in the minds of the senior responsible military authorities on the scene that Israel could almost certainly handle the combined Arab forces it would face. According to Lieutenant General J. C. D'Arcy, who was the British Army's general officer commanding for Palestine, that is, the senior military authority responsible for the entire area, there was no question whatever that, from a military point of view, Israelis would win handily any possible contest.¹¹ This was his official assessment and military evaluation. That information was in the hands of the Department of State in April 1946, and in Whitehall long before that.¹² There were views which differed with General

D'Arcy's, but none of them came from trained military observers with his knowledge and sources.

How was it possible for the regulars at State to suppress or ignore this vital intelligence? Were their theories and predispositions so important to them that, as Truman said of the State Department's Loy Henderson, they would actually lie to him? Perhaps Cohen will take this up at another time.

For now it is enough to conclude that this is an absolutely essential and completely readable book, vital reading for anyone interested in this area.

And what about the opening question, the Bruno Bettelheim story? Was Truman the godfather of Israel a myth?

Well, the end of the story is that Truman was in the first instance an American politician, possessed of a sensitive conscience, and a deeply religious humanitarian. A man who grew in office, he was willing to spend literally millions of dollars and take a considerable personal political risk in order to rescue a lot of Jews interned in European camps, even if it meant bringing them to the United States. He never meant to found another Asian state, certainly not one that seemed to be based on religion or race. If in the fullness of time it became clear that the state was the only way to save these people, then so be it, he would back it although it was not his solution of choice. Does that not make him at least the accidental instrument of the Zionist triumph? If he was not the godfather of the Jewish state, surely he became its reluctant midwife?

—Allen Howard Podet

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Notes

1. In fact, Cohen's case is overdone. When Truman refers to "kikes," he is generally referring not to Jews as such, but to certain Jews of a certain kind who are at that time making him furious. Even the references in Cohen will bear that out.

2. Allen H. Podet, "Anti-Zionism in a Key U. S. Diplomat: Loy Henderson at the End of World War II." *American Jewish Archives* 30, no.2 (November 1978): 155-187.

3. Michael Cohen questions this judgment, from "well organized" to the end of the sentence. Cohen to Podet, 17 July 1991, filed with American Jewish Archives.

4. See, for example, the Flynn and Wallace statements. Cohen, p. 69.

5. Version "C." A copy of it was filed in April 1946 with the Department of State in the original AACI papers, where it still is to be found. AACI Papers, Box 11, in the Department of State, Suitland, Maryland, Depository collection, transferred to the National Archives.

6. So Senator Bilbo, for example. Bevin said as much publicly at a press conference, and was pilloried for it. Under Secretary of State Lovett wrote the same sentiment in a confidential Foreign Service memo, and it remained within the Department of State.

7. Loy Henderson, head of Near Eastern and African affairs (NEA), a man who was literally terrified of the Soviet Union, wrote and argued the anti-Zionist reports. But he was, as he says, merely the one with the banner: the opinions and views he advanced were common to everyone in the Department of State who was assigned to deal with this area. Dean Acheson, says Henderson, "ducked" the whole Palestine issue, so it fell to Lovett and to Henderson to deal with it. Podet, "Anti-Zionism", pp. 155-187.

Regarding the above note, Cohen points out that the secretary of state until January 1949 was Marshall. Henderson, then, may have meant Marshall, although he said Acheson. Cohen considers it more likely that it was not Acheson but Byrnes, and later to a lesser extent Marshall, who as Henderson says, "ducked" it. Acheson himself was under secretary to Secretary Byrnes. When Marshall succeeded Byrnes as secretary of state in 1947, Marshall left Palestine to his under secretary, Lovett, just as Byrnes had left Palestine to his under secretary, Acheson. Cohen to Podet, 17 July 1991.

My impression when I spoke with Henderson in 1976-1980 was that he indeed meant Acheson, just as he said, but he was referring to the time before Acheson became secretary of state in Truman's second administration. On Acheson's use of devious practices, see Allen Howard Podet, *Success and Failure of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry 1945-1946: Last Chance in Palestine* (Lewiston, N.Y. Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), p. 338.

8. Cohen prefers "Palestine" to "Near East." Cohen to Podet, 17 July 1991. Podet uses "Near East" here to suggest that Truman considered larger problems to be involved than merely geographic Palestine.

9. Cohen states: "I do not believe that either Whitehall or Foggy Bottom [actually] wrote Bernadotte's plan." He adds that they all quickly found common ground, and at the most, they leaned on Bernadotte a little at Rhodes. There were a few elements of Bernadotte's plan that the State Department did not entirely agree to, such as Jerusalem. Cohen to Podet, 17 July 1991.

10. Cohen cites British Foreign Office (Eastern) papers (FO 371/68642, 75334 PRO /E614).

11. Lieutenant General D'Arcy, *Report*, Great Britain, Public Record Office (PRO), PRO File 4 (1946), Palestine and Trans-Jordan, F.O 371/52525, E4623, E4624, E4773, E4774. Analysis and discussion in Podet, *Success and Failure*, pp. 52, 249-256. This book is cited by Cohen.

12. Amikam Nachmani, *Great Power Discord in Palestine: The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry into the Problems of European Jewry and Palestine 1945-1946* (London: Frank Cass, 1987), pp. 171-174. This book is cited by Cohen.

Brief Notices

Brecher, Frank W. *Reluctant Ally: United States Foreign Policy Toward the Jews from Wilson to Roosevelt*. New York and Westport: Greenwood Press, 1991. 168 pp.

Brecher's volume centers on the manner in which American foreign policy responded to the conditions of European Jewry from the administration of Woodrow Wilson to that of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The author finds two parts to that policy: a "humanitarian" concern with the plight of Europe's Jews, especially those of Eastern Europe in the immediate period after World War I. Yet this policy was outside the established set of diplomatic relations between the United States and the nations in question and did not disturb the political status quo. Brecher also sees the growing Zionist movement towards the establishment of a Jewish state as an issue which the United States essentially "passed on" to Great Britain, which, after all, was responsible for Palestine, the intended site of the Jewish homeland, and the general political atmosphere of the Middle East.

These two separate policies, joined only in the immediate post-war years leading up to the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, are the real factors, according to Brecher, that highlight America's response to the Holocaust. In a final section of the book, he offers a critique of the various works that deal with America's "abandonment of the Jews" during the Holocaust and calls for a more critical approach to the question, free of moral judgments that cloud the crucial issues related to America and American Jewry's efforts to save European Jewry from the grip of the murderous Nazi vise.

Davies, Alan, Edited by. *Antisemitism in Canada: History and Interpretation*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1992. 304 pp.

For most of this century, Canadians, both Jews and Christians, have lived under what the Canadian sociologist Evelyn Kallen called the "cherished Canadian myth of Canada the Good—the tolerant, peaceful and above all 'just society.'"

More than a decade ago that myth was shattered by the findings of Irving Abella and Harold Troper in their important volume, *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe* (1982). In that book, the clearly anti-Jewish immigration policies of the William Mackenzie King government during the Holocaust and the pervasive silence of the Canadian churches in light of the tragedy engulfing European Jewry clearly showed another Canada, one whose actions depressingly paralleled a cold and uncaring international community.

Antisemitism in Canada is, if one may use the expression, the "final nail in the coffin" of Canada the Good. Superbly edited, with an equally excellent introduction, by Alan Davies, the book contains eleven essays which cover the history of Canadian anti-Semitism from pre-federation Canada to the notorious activities of the Holocaust deniers James Keegstra and Ernst Zündel. Included in the volume are, among others, essays on anti-Semitism in Quebec, the writings of the notorious intellectual anti-Semite Goldwin Smith, who managed to hate Jews in the United States and England as well, and anti-Semitism in the Social Credit movement center of Alberta.

Even though he is not one of the volume's contributors, one must pay credit to the pioneering research of David Rome, who brought to light the strong anti-Semitic atmosphere in Quebec during the 1930s.

It is said that Canadians define themselves in part by being everything Americans are not. Unfortunately, a history of anti-Semitism is one national characteristic neither nation can deny.

Dubrovsky, Gertrude Wishnick. *The Land Was Theirs: Jewish Farmers in the Garden State*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992. xvi, 251 pp.

Gertrude Dubrovsky knows American Jewish agriculture and its history. She knows it as a scholar, as an award-winning film-

maker, and as a young woman growing up in the New Jersey Jewish farming community of Farmingdale. In this brief history of American Jewish farming, of Jewish farmers in the "Garden State," and of Gertrude Dubrovsky's own sweet and painful relationship to her farming roots in Farmingdale, the reader is treated to a marvelous portrait of a community and a time which contributed so much to the growth and success of American Jewish life.

Feingold, Henry L., ed. *The Jewish People in America*. 5 vols. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992.

Eli Faber. *A Time for Planting: The First Migration, 1654–1820*. Vol. 1, 188 pp.

Hasia A. Diner. *A Time for Gathering. The Second Migration, 1820–1880*. Vol. 2, 313 pp.

Gerald Sorin. *A Time for Building: The Third Migration, 1880–1920*. Vol. 3, 306 pp.

Henry L. Feingold. *A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream, 1920–1945*. Vol. 4, 338 pp.

Edward S. Shapiro. *A Time for Healing: American Jewry Since World War II*. Vol. 5, 313 pp.

No review can do justice to such an enormous undertaking. It is to the credit of the American Jewish Historical Society that it sponsored the publication of these five volumes on the occasion of its one hundredth birthday and to Professor Henry L. Feingold that he undertook the awesome responsibility of seeing them through to publication.

The five volumes are, of course, the products of five different historians—different in gender, religious orientation, political persuasion, and a host of other differences. Unlike recent one-volume histories of American Jewry by Arthur Hertzberg, Howard Sachar, and Abraham Karp, or even the monumental four-volume history by Jacob Rader Marcus, there is no continuity of inquiry—different authors ask different questions of different periods within the American Jewish experience.

There is in these volumes a certain effort to synthesize, revise, and put forth new theories on the evolution of American Jewish life over the past three centuries. What all the authors agree upon

is the challenge to American Jews that has been the American Jewish experience. All of them find a continuity in the tension of being a Jew and an American, in the problems as well as the potential that are inherent in the freedom offered by America.

The publication of these five volumes is a wonderful achievement and a significant advance for the field of American Jewish studies.

Frager, Ruth A. *Sweatshop Strife: Class, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Jewish Labour Movement in Toronto, 1900-1939*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993. 300 pp.

Ruth Frager's study of the Jewish labor movement in Toronto in the four decades before World War II is important for several reasons. Among the most important is that Frager was able to use Yiddish sources for her work in order to understand the complex interaction between class and ethnicity, for as she puts it, "no culture is truly accessible except through its own language." This is especially true for working-class Jews in the early part of this century in Canada and the United States.

Frager's work is also important because she has identified weaknesses among Canadian and American labor historians in identifying ethnic issues in their analyses, and weaknesses among immigration historians who have failed to recognize important class issues in ethnic history.

Professor Frager has not made these mistakes. What results is a well-researched study that relies upon primary research material, oral interviews, and the "right questions" that produce significant answers about the roles of class, ethnicity, and gender in Toronto's needle trades.

Joselit, Jenna Weissman. *Lending Dignity: The First Hundred Years of the Hebrew Free Loan Society of New York*. New York: Hebrew Free Loan Society of New York, 1992. 102 pp.

Judaism has its share of enduring values. No matter which denominational direction, the children of the religious school still sing about *Gemilath Chassodim*, or acts of loving-kindness.

Such a biblical injunction motivated eleven immigrants from Vilna, the "Jerusalem of Lithuania," to open in 1892 in New York City, the unnamed Jerusalem of America, the Hebrew Gemilath Chassodim Association of New York, which ultimately became the Hebrew Free Loan Society. One hundred years later, the Society has given over \$108 million in interest-free loans to over one million families in New York.

To record the centennial history of this king of Hebrew Free Loan Societies in America, the organization chose Jenna Weissman Joselit. It could not have made a better choice. Professor Joselit knows New York Jewry, from its poorest immigrants to its most outrageous criminal types. She has written a history which is as solid and as dignified as the manner in which the Society treated the many millions who have asked for its aid.

Kann, Kenneth L. *Comarades and Chicken Ranchers: The Story of a California Jewish Community*. Ithaca N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993. 303 pp.

Petaluma, California has been for the better part of this century the site of an extraordinary Jewish community. It is in many ways unique in the history of American Jewish farming communities—a place where political ideology and economic profitability mixed in a successful manner.

Petaluma was not a utopian colony, devoted to socialist humanitarianism first and making a living second. It succeeded because its Jewish inhabitants understood that in order to change the world, one needed to have an economic basis from which to support the revolution. They found it in chicken farming, a west coast parallel to the Jewish chicken farmers of New Jersey.

In the early part of the century, Petaluma's Jews were for the most part leftists, whether Communists, socialists or Zionists. They did not need religion—many of them had left the *shtetlach* of Eastern Europe to escape the rigidity of that world.

But what they had rejected in the old country was the only thing that many of them could agree upon. Even left-wingers were divided between the *linkeh* (leftists) and the *rekhteh* (rightists).

Kenneth L. Kann's portrait of Petaluma's Jews through their

own words (he has already published a volume on one of the most unforgettable of the community, Joe Rapoport) is also an effort to probe the identity of American Jews in the twentieth century. He finds that Petaluma's first generation, so certain of their Jewish identity, more through their prophetic sense of social justice and the Yiddish language than through organized religion, gave way to a generation of Jews who sought to downplay their Jewishness and to accentuate their Americanness, who gave way to a generation of hot-tubbers and pot-smokers who "feel Jewish" in some vague and mystical relationship to a religion and a people they neither know nor understand.

Miller, Jeannette F. *Voices of Hazleton: A Century of Jewish Life*. Hazleton, a. 1993. 288 pp.

Hazleton, Pennsylvania, is not a name that will immediately make one think of Jewish life in the United States. Unless one knows the area, and knows that Wilkes-Barre is about 27 miles to the north and that Allentown is about 43 miles to the south, the name and the place may mean absolutely nothing.

Although Jews never made up more than about five percent of Hazleton's population of under 40,000, they played a vital role in the economic life of the community, especially after the coal industry lost its economic importance.

Jeannette F. Miller has lived in Hazleton less than a decade. But she writes like a native, and her portrait of Jewish life in Hazleton from 1893 to 1993 is both a labor of love and a reflection of American Jewish life as it evolved in many Hazletons across the country.

Sorkin, Sidney. *Bridges to an American City: A Guide to Chicago's Landsmanshaften, 1870 to 1990*. New York: Peter Lang, 1993. xvi, 480 pp.

Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe came to the United States with a limited amount of cultural baggage. One of the most important items they normally jettisoned was any continued feel-

ing for the country or the region, city, and village from which they had immigrated. But they never lost their feelings for the Jews of those places. They tried to recreate in the midst of early twentieth century America the kind of atmosphere which surrounded Jewish life in the Old World. Whether through religious congregation, charity, burial society, or Yiddish language and cultural activities, the landsmanshaften, as the organized community groups were called, strove to recreate the warmth and protectiveness of Jewish life as they remembered it and to ensure the well-being of its members and their families in their new surroundings.

Following the pioneering work of the late Isaac E. Rontch on the Jewish landsmanshaften of New York, and the more general histories by Michael R. Weissner and Hannah Kliger, Sidney Sorkin has published an important guide to the many organizations that existed in Chicago from 1870 to 1990. His survey includes both Ashkenazic and Sephardic organizations.

Wertheimer, Jack, Edited by. *The Modern Jewish Experience: A Reader's Guide*. New York: New York University Press, 1993. xviii, 392 pp.

This book is a testament to the Jewish will for survival and renewal. Less than a half-century ago, the heart of Jewish life and learning was dealt a near-fatal blow during the years of the Holocaust. Less than a half-century later, *The Modern Jewish Experience: A Reader's Guide* is evidence that the heart is beating almost normally again at least with regard to Jewish learning.

A distinguished team of scholars, both Israeli and North American, have provided scholars, teachers and interested laypersons with a marvelous source book for Jewish study and teaching. With hundreds of departments of Jewish studies and thousands of courses on Jewish topics, such a book is necessary and invaluable. Even those who have no direct relation to Jewish scholarship should own a copy of this resource item—just to reassure themselves that Jewish learning is alive and so, hopefully, is the Jewish future.