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Scholars' Conference on

American Jewish History

The Third Biennial Scholars' Conference on American Jewish History, under the sponsorship of the Jacob R. Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives and the Academic Council of the American Jewish Historical Society, will be held on the Cincinnati campus of the **Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion on June 10-12, 1998**. To mark the fiftieth anniversary of the American Jewish Archives and to honor the legacy of Dr. Jacob R. Marcus, this conference will explore such issues as new paradigms in American Jewish history; comparative Jewish experience within the Western Hemisphere; the implications of emerging work on gender, race, multi-culturalism, and ethnicity within the study of American Jewish history; the preservation of Jewish space, documents, and artifacts in archives, museums, and historical sites; and the construction of American Jewish historical memory and culture. One-page paper abstract and panel proposals for the June conference will be **due November 30, 1997**.

Please submit to:

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Call for papers

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Mordecai M. Kaplan
(1881–1983)

The Emergence of Reconstructionism: An Evolving American Judaism, 1922–1945

Reena Sigman Friedman

The Reconstructionist movement is the youngest of the four branches of American Judaism, having achieved full denominational status only in the late 1960s, with the founding of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Philadelphia. The College curriculum, designed in accord with the “civilizational” approach of the movement’s founder, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, placed equal value on all periods of Jewish history and on all forms of Jewish creativity, rather than focusing primarily on rabbinic texts. For the first time, the movement was able to train rabbis, imbued with a distinctive Reconstructionist viewpoint, for the growing number of congregations affiliating with the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot (established as the Reconstructionist Federation of Congregations in 1955, and now known as the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation).

However, the origins of the Reconstructionist movement date back to the early 1920s, when Kaplan first articulated his critique of both Orthodoxy and Reform, and presented a bold new agenda for the revitalization of Judaism. In a monumental *Menorah Journal* article entitled “A Program for the Reconstruction of Judaism,” which appeared in August 1920, Kaplan advocated a shift in the “center of spiritual interest from the realm of abstract dogmas and traditional codes of law to the pulsating life of Israel.”¹ He called for the reinterpretation of Judaism in keeping with modern thought, the strengthening of Jewish communities in Palestine and the Diaspora, and the formulation of a new code of Jewish practice.²

In writing this article, Kaplan, a professor of homiletics and principal of the Teachers’ Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary (since 1909), sought to chart a clear ideological and programmatic direction for the Conservative movement.³ While he proposed the creation of an organization devoted to this cause, Kaplan insisted that he had no intention of establishing a new denomination:

The achievement of our purpose will be facilitated if our initial activities identify us in people's minds as a new school of thought in Judaism.... We should not constitute ourselves a third party in Judaism. There is already enough of fragmentation and division among us without creating a new sect in Jewry. What we need is that a number of individual Jews and Jewesses devote themselves seriously to the task of carrying out a program like the one outlined. They should form themselves into a society for the diffusion of what may be termed the new religious realism which shall give us a Judaism that is both historic and progressive.⁴

Kaplan's fundamental ambivalence about denominationalism remained evident in his writing and activities over the next forty years.

The Society for the Advancement of Judaism

At the time of the *Menorah Journal* article's publication, Kaplan was serving as rabbi of the Jewish Center, founded on Manhattan's fashionable West Side only two years earlier. Due to controversies with some members of the board over his views on economic justice and his increasing criticism of Orthodoxy (brought to a head by the *Menorah Journal* article), Kaplan ultimately felt compelled to resign.⁵ He left the Center in January 1922, along with thirty-five families, to establish a new congregation, based on the principles of his developing philosophy of Judaism.⁶

The new congregation, located only a few blocks from the Jewish Center, became known as the Society for the Advancement of Judaism. At an early planning meeting, Kaplan described his goals for the SAJ:

This institution shall not duplicate in method or point of view any other existing synagogue, including the Jewish Center.... We want to establish an organization which will interpret to the world the Judaism of our ancestors. This institution shall translate a living Judaism into its service and ritual. We want to start... an American synagogue, a synagogue which shall strike its roots in American life; which shall show to this country that there is a future, not only a past.⁷

Those who joined with Kaplan in establishing the SAJ were largely first- and second-generation Jews of East European descent, successful businessmen who were traditional in their religious practice.⁸ As has often been noted, Kaplan's ideology spoke directly to the concerns and sensibilities of second-generation American Jews who were attempting to reconcile their traditional beliefs and practices with an American way of life. It was his followers' devotion to Kaplan that motivated them to leave the Jewish Center, to which they were dedicated and in which they had invested large sums of money.⁹ They were aware of Kaplan's stature, and took pride in the fact that he was their rabbi. "When he walked into the SAJ on Shabbat morning, he walked down the aisle and they all stood up ... they revered him," recalled Rabbi Ira Eisenstein, Kaplan's disciple, son-in-law, and successor at the SAJ.¹⁰ Many SAJ members believed that they were part of a grand experiment in Jewish life. As Eisenstein put it in his autobiography, "They sensed that he [Kaplan] was making important statements, and they were thrilled at the thought that they were present at the formulation of new theories. They were flattered that he tried new ideas out on them. Being his congregants raised their status above that of others."¹¹

The SAJ's Program

From the start, both Kaplan and his supporters had a larger vision for the SAJ. "We must guard against being looked upon as a mere congregation," Kaplan declared about a month after the institution's establishment.¹² As a "society," the SAJ was expected to transcend the usual round of synagogue activities, and to serve and influence the larger community. It did so through an impressive adult education program, cultural activities, active participation in Zionist and other Jewish causes, and making its facilities available for various community functions. By all accounts, the SAJ was a most vibrant place in its first few decades.¹³

In Kaplan's view, "the main purpose of the Organization [i.e., the SAJ] [was] to do adult education work for all Jews, and only incidentally and in addition to this work ... conduct other activities, such as a Hebrew School, synagogue and social activities for its existing membership."¹⁴ The SAJ offered a wide array of quality adult educa-

tion programs for both its own membership and the community-at-large. Weekly forums in the 1920s featured such prominent speakers as Judah Magnes, Samson Benderly, and Horace Kallen.¹⁵ The range of topics was astounding: biblical interpretation (taught by Kaplan), modern Jewish history, contemporary Jewish life, educational theory, "social science and Jewish history," modern Hebrew literature, the history of Jewish women, biblical themes in Renaissance art, etc.¹⁶

Cultural activities were also plentiful. In keeping with Kaplan's emphasis on Judaism as a total civilization, encompassing more than religious aspects, the SAJ program featured an outstanding music program (a talented cantor, choir, and many musical performances), dramatic readings, frequent exhibits, especially of the work of visiting Palestinian artists and craftsmen, and Dr. Hareubeni, a well-known Palestinian botanist (SAJ members also raised money for Habima, the Israeli theater group).¹⁷

This emphasis on Jewish (especially Hebrew) culture was linked to the SAJ's strong support of Zionism and the Yishuv in the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁸ It was a time when quite a few American Jews were either opposed to or ambivalent about Zionism, and when Zionist organization was fragmented and rather weak in this country.¹⁹ Kaplan himself made numerous visits to Palestine, including representing American Jewry at the dedication of the Hebrew University in 1925 and returning to the university to teach from 1937 to 1939.²⁰ Numerous Zionist groups held their meetings at the hospitable SAJ, including Young Judea, Habonim, and Hadassah.²¹ SAJ members attended lectures on the history and theory of Zionism, and on modern Hebrew literature.²² Perhaps most interesting, SAJ members, at Kaplan's urging, financially supported the publication of the well-known Hebrew literary journal *Hashiloach*, originally edited by Ahad Ha-am, and later by Joseph Klausner.²³ In addition, Chaim Weizmann addressed the congregation on several occasions (he was made an honorary SAJ member), and the SAJ took a leading role among the other West Side synagogues in raising funds for Zionist causes.²⁴ By 1945, when Zionist sentiment in the United States had intensified, the SAJ affiliated with the Zionist Organization of America "as a regularly constituted Zionist district." This meant that every SAJ member automatically became a member of the Zionist organization.²⁵ The commitment to

Zionism evidenced at the SAJ is attributable to Kaplan's personal influence, and has remained an important component of the Reconstructionist movement.

Undoubtedly, it was Kaplan's charismatic leadership that shaped the unique character of the SAJ in its early years. He expounded his developing philosophy of Judaism in many provocative Sabbath sermons over the years.²⁶ Above all, he stressed intellectual honesty and ethical behavior. In keeping with his view that Judaism's primary purpose was to promote ethical behavior in all aspects of life, he and the SAJ's lay leadership developed a "Code of Ethical Practice" (designed to guide members in their social and business relationships) and even organized a "Board of Arbitration" to negotiate disputes arising among SAJ members.²⁷ The SAJ's "Blue Book," put out in its early years, stated the goals of the Society, and focused on ethical behavior.²⁸

Liturgical and Ritual Innovations

Despite its distinctive style, the SAJ certainly resembled other Conservative synagogues of the time. While the congregation remained traditional in practice, the ideology and liturgical innovations that would later come to characterize the Reconstructionist approach to Judaism first emerged at the SAJ. The congregation became, in effect, a laboratory for the testing of Kaplan's ideas. As he expressed it at the 1924 annual meeting,

Jewish ritual, which conforms with the spirit of the times and spiritual needs, is gradually being developed at the SAJ [with] the introduction of an intense Hebrew spirit in the services, elimination of unnecessary repetition, and the addition of poetic selections from modern Hebrew and passages from the Bible arranged in a logical form about definite themes.²⁹

As early as 1922, the SAJ published a booklet, *Selections from the Psalms for Responsive Reading* (including some "outside" readings, as well) for use in Sabbath services.³⁰ Soon after, Kaplan developed, and the board published, a booklet of supplementary readings to accompany the traditional Haggadah, and later one for the High Holi-

days.³¹ In keeping with his belief that prayers should be authentic, intellectually honest, and meaningful to the modern worshipper, Kaplan eliminated what he considered to be objectionable passages regarding Jewish chosenness in the *Aleinu* prayer and the Torah blessings. He also removed references to sacrifices, resurrection of the dead, and connections between prayer or the performance of commandments and natural events (from Kaplan's standpoint, rejecting a "theurgic" — or magical — view of nature). In each of these instances, Kaplan substituted other passages, often taken from the liturgy itself or from other traditional sources, which he considered to be more appropriate. He even eliminated the *Kol Nidre* prayer for a number of years at the SAJ, substituting Psalm 130 with the traditional melody, only to later reinstate it with some modifications, due to pressure from congregants and the convincing arguments of Rabbi Judah David Eisenstein.³² Kaplan's creativity was also evident in the prayers that he composed for various occasions, e.g. "The Thirteen Wants," for the dedication of the SAJ's new quarters in February 1926.³³ Many of these liturgical changes were later incorporated into the Reconstructionist *New Haggadah* and *Sabbath Prayerbook*, published in 1941 and 1945, respectively.

In the opinion of his biographer, Mel Scult, "Some of Kaplan's most significant departures from traditional norms concerned the role of women."³⁴ Kaplan had supported women's suffrage from the pulpit of the Jewish Center, preached several sermons dealing with women in the Bible and in Jewish history, insisted that women and men have equal voting rights in that institution,³⁵ and continued to encourage women's participation at the SAJ. He advocated mixed seating in both synagogues, but was forced to compromise on this issue (i.e., separate seating but with no *mechitza* curtain or partition at the Jewish Center). It is well known that he introduced the first Bat Mitzvah ceremony at the SAJ for his daughter, Judith, in 1922, only a few months after its founding.³⁶

Of course, it was some time before women gained full equality in the congregation; according to Jack Wertheimer, they were not counted in the minyan or called to the Torah until 1951.³⁷ The opposition of some members of the congregation slowed the process of women's acceptance, as is evident in the 1945 debate regarding the granting of aliyot (blessings before and after the Torah readings) to

girls post Bat Mitzvah or confirmation. Kaplan was in favor of the proposal, and opinion was divided among the SAJ membership. A decision—to be made by the members—was postponed pending further discussion.³⁸ Nevertheless, women achieved significant equality at the SAJ long before the issue was even raised in other American synagogues, and gender equality has remained a central principle of the Reconstructionist movement.

Organizational Developments

Despite the many innovations launched at the SAJ in its first two decades, it remained affiliated with the United Synagogue (the congregational arm of the Conservative movement) and clearly saw itself as operating within that framework.³⁹ It was largely due to Kaplan's loyalty to the Jewish Theological Seminary that he rejected two significant opportunities to chart a new course, based on his developing ideology, in the 1920s.

In July 1920, Kaplan and several other young graduates of the JTS Rabbinical School met and established the Society for Jewish Renaissance.⁴⁰ These Seminary alumni sought to establish a clearer direction for the Conservative movement (which would differentiate it from Orthodoxy and Reform). Some of the group's more radical members (e.g., Herman Rubenovitz) advocated breaking away from the Conservative framework. Ultimately, according to Scult, Kaplan, as president of the group, played a key role in directing it away from such decisive action to become a passive and basically ineffectual "study group" within the Conservative movement.⁴¹

Moreover, in January 1927, Kaplan resigned from the Seminary, due to mounting tensions with several members of the faculty. He seriously contemplated an offer by Rabbi Stephen Wise of a faculty position at his recently established rabbinical seminary, the Jewish Institute of Religion. Although Kaplan was intrigued by the opportunity to develop his ideas in a congenial environment, he ultimately succumbed to entreaties by many in the Seminary community, including its president, Cyrus Adler, to remain at JTS.⁴² In the end, Kaplan's ties to the Seminary prevented him from taking a step that would have had significant consequences for the future development of the Reconstructionist movement.⁴³

Despite Kaplan's reluctance to institutionalize Reconstructionism in the early years, there seem to have been spontaneous strivings toward organization, even in the SAJ's first decade. The publication and wide circulation of Kaplan's booklet *A New Approach to Jewish Life* (1924) had generated excitement in many quarters.⁴⁴ In the late 1920s, there was a flurry of activity, with Reconstructionist "chapters" sprouting up in a number of cities, including Scranton, Pennsylvania (Max Arzt and Bernard Heller),⁴⁵ Cleveland (Solomon Goldman), Chicago (Max Kadushin), New Bedford, Massachusetts (Rabbi Arnoff), Hartford, Connecticut (Morris Silverman), the Pacific Coast (Meyer Winkler), Detroit, and Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn (Temple Bethel).⁴⁶ Many of these were founded by Kaplan's former students at JTS (such as Max Arzt in Scranton, Solomon Goldman in Cleveland, and Max Kadushin in Chicago), a tribute to his influence as a teacher. Soon after, SAJ leaders discussed the possibility of establishing branches similar to these pioneering ones throughout the country.⁴⁷ In addition, Eastern and Midwestern Councils were in the process of being formed.⁴⁸ The first issue of the SAJ Review, a monthly magazine that featured articles by Kaplan and other writers, appeared on September 14, 1928.⁴⁹ On October 8 of that year, according to SAJ board reports, "Dr. Kaplan urged the immediate organization of our New York chapter, for there were rumblings in the air which might lead to a national movement in the next five years."⁵⁰ By October 22, Kaplan reported to the SAJ board that "the SAJ movement is spreading throughout the country."⁵¹

Recognizing this organizational momentum, SAJ's leaders decided (a few months earlier) to separate the SAJ "congregation" from the "Society." The split would enable the Society to disseminate Reconstructionist ideas (through lectures and publications) and support the newly created chapters and congregations whose members "subscribe[d] to the SAJ platform."⁵² In discussing the reorganization proposal, board members commented, "The general consensus of opinion was that the SAJ movement could not grow unless the congregation of the SAJ be separated from the SAJ movement, whose aims and purposes embrace a good deal more than mere congregational work."⁵³ At the same meeting, on April 9, board members discussed the possibility of a tripartite organization: (1) an "SAJ Council" (of rabbis, educators, social workers, and other "creative" individu-

als, who would find ways of "giving concrete expression to the ideals of the SAJ,"⁵⁴ (2) congregations whose members "subscribe to the SAJ platform," and (3) chapters of lay men and women "who wish to advance the cause of Judaism along the lines of the SAJ platform without necessarily engaging in congregational activities" (e.g., through study circles, literary or dramatic groups, etc.).⁵⁵

Kaplan, who had always conceived of the SAJ as being more than a synagogue, was clearly encouraged by these developments.⁵⁶ As he declared, at the SAJ's annual meeting on May 9, 1928, "We were organized chiefly for the purpose of bringing home to American Jews the realization that Judaism means more than merely worshipping in a Jewish way. It means a totality of things. We want Jews all over the country to join the SAJ, and we must make it possible for people to join."⁵⁷ Although the organizational structure discussed in 1928 did not materialize fully at the time, Kaplan maintained two years later that the "Society" represented a "larger vision" and a "new viewpoint" of Jewish life that would flourish in America fifty years hence.⁵⁸

Despite these lofty predictions, the "SAJ movement" did not spread significantly at that time. The question, of course, is what Kaplan and his followers meant by a "new viewpoint" in Jewish life. All indications are that they saw themselves as working to effect change within the context of the Conservative movement. As Kaplan stated at the SAJ annual members' meeting in 1929, "The SAJ does not set itself up as a model congregation for others. Its aim should be to supply the platform and program of work for Conservative Judaism in America. This ... implies two essentials (1) Judaism as a civilization and (2) A maximum of Jewishness in all phases of Jewish life."⁵⁹ In the late 1920s, as Scult points out, the ideological boundaries of Conservatism had not yet been firmly established, and many saw it as an American form of traditional Judaism rather than a separate movement. Kaplan continued to resist breaking away from the Seminary and the Rabbinical Assembly until his increasing alienation from these institutions made such a step inevitable.⁶⁰

Ira Eisenstein

With the arrival of Ira Eisenstein at the SAJ in 1928, Reconstruction-

ism increasingly took a turn toward denominationalism. Throughout his association with Kaplan, Eisenstein served as a gadfly, goading his teacher into recognizing the organizational and institutional implications of his philosophy of Judaism. As Eisenstein put it in a recent interview, "I guess I was the main engine that propelled the implementation of Kaplan's ideas."⁶¹

Eisenstein was attracted to Kaplan in the 1920s when, as a student at Columbia College, he had occasion to hear Kaplan preach at the SAJ or at Zionist gatherings. He decided to attend the Jewish Theological Seminary, rather than the Jewish Institute of Religion, in order to study with Kaplan. Eisenstein explained the appeal which Kaplan's ideas had for him, a searching rabbinical student, as follows:

Keeping one's eyes glued to the past could never achieve what Kaplan was urging upon us, namely, to face the future boldly. If this meant radical adaptation, so be it; the law of survival, we had learned, is adapt or die.... But the "moderns" were neither here nor there.... That was why they were inhibited about throwing themselves completely into the worship, abandoning themselves to the genuine emotions which the words they were pronouncing should have been generating. Authenticity was lacking; in Kaplan I found it, and I was more than ever determined to explore the road he was traveling.⁶²

Eisenstein came to the SAJ as a senior student at JTS. His initial tasks were to edit the *SAJ Review* and to lead a youth group. Gradually, he assumed more responsibility at the institution, as he solidified his partnership with Mordecai Kaplan, whom he described in his autobiography as "the star to whom I had hitched my wagon."⁶³ Eisenstein became SAJ executive director in 1930 and, following his graduation from JTS in 1931, "Assistant Leader" (rabbi), later to be promoted to "Associate Leader" and "Leader" (in 1945).

"Judaism as a Civilization"

Kaplan's magnum opus, *Judaism as a Civilization*, which appeared in May 1934, provided the first comprehensive exposition of his ideology as it had matured over a period of many years. The book of-

ferred a perceptive critique of the solutions posed by Orthodoxy, Reform, and Conservatism to the modern Jewish situation, and presented a fresh approach.

Jewish tradition, Kaplan argued, must be reinterpreted in light of twentieth-century thought, particularly the growth of modern science and religious scholarship. This line of reasoning was in keeping with the ideas of a number of liberal Protestant theologians of his day, such as Henry Nelson Wieman and Harry Emerson Fosdick. Both of these men, like Kaplan, viewed religion through a naturalistic, empirical lens, and sought to render religious life meaningful to their readers.⁶⁴

In Kaplan's opinion, Judaism must be regarded as a "civilization" in the broadest sense of the word. While religion was the primary component of Jewish civilization, it was by no means the only one, and significant weight was to be given to all forms of Jewish expression, including art, music, and other creative endeavors. He called for cultivation of the Jewish arts, as well as intensified Jewish education, as the best means of preserving Jewish life.

Furthermore, Kaplan shifted the center of gravity from God to the Jewish people, which he regarded as being pivotal to the development of Jewish religion. Following the great sociologist Emile Durkheim, he viewed religion as emerging from the context of the group. The author stressed the fact that Jewish civilization, bound up as it is with a living people, had been evolving constantly over time. Change and development, in Kaplan's view, had been characteristic of Judaism throughout its existence, and would ensure its healthy development in the future.

As Judaism evolved, many of its key concepts, including its "God ideal," also evolved. In the wake of the scientific revolution, Kaplan rejected all forms of supernaturalism in Jewish thought and liturgy. This included such ideas as divine revelation, Jewish chosenness (which he regarded as arrogant and incompatible with American democracy), and a "theurgic" approach to prayer. As Scult explains it, "Kaplan's ultimate goal was to find a way to reinterpret the belief in God so that the divine could continue to function in modern Jewish life."⁶⁵ In this connection, Kaplan saw the biblical and rabbinic writings not as authoritative legal codes but as human creations which offered guidelines to religious practice. Jewish rituals,

for him, were "folkways" which preserved group memories and transmitted fundamental group values.

Finally, Kaplan was very much "at home" in America and, probably more than any other modern Jewish thinker, grappled with the challenges and rewards of "living in two civilizations." He advocated full participation by Jews in American society, along with the strengthening and democratization of Jewish communities in both Palestine and the United States.⁶⁶

Reactions to the book's appearance, both positive and negative, were strong, and even Kaplan's opponents recognized him as a force with which to be reckoned.⁶⁷ In the months following the publication of *Judaism as a Civilization*, Ira Eisenstein addressed Jewish audiences on the major themes of the book. (Of course, Kaplan spoke to groups as well, but, as he was involved in other writing, he often asked his closest colleague to represent him.) A few years later, Eisenstein published his own book, *Creative Judaism* (1936) which presented the ideas of *Judaism as a Civilization* in a more popular form. "Thus," wrote Eisenstein (in his autobiography), "in a sense my real career began. It consisted in interpreting Kaplan to the people."⁶⁸

Evolution Toward Denominationalism

The process of spreading and popularizing Kaplan's ideas was furthered by the launching of the *Reconstructionist* magazine in 1934-35, which, according to Eisenstein, "would take the basic ideas of the book and apply them to the current scene."⁶⁹ The magazine's first editorial board, assembled under the direction of Kaplan and Eisenstein, included Rabbis Ben Zion Bokser, Israel Goldstein, Leon Lang, Eugene Kohn, Milton Steinberg, Barnett Brickner, and Edward Israel, and Drs. Alexander Dushkin, Jacob Golub, and Max Kadushin.⁷⁰ The magazine was to become a critical forum for the articulation of Reconstructionist ideas; Kaplan himself traced the emergence of the movement to its establishment.⁷¹ According to Eisenstein, the *Reconstructionist* was "the movement" at that time. "The magazine," he continued, "was a major force. It convinced and influenced a lot of people. We know for a fact that many rabbis used our editorials for their sermons.... If it weren't for the magazine, I

don't think we would have generated enough positive feeling for these ideas to be able to [accomplish what we did later]."⁷²

By 1938, when Kaplan was in Palestine on a two-year appointment at the Hebrew University (teaching "Principles of Education"), Eisenstein, along with the other members of the *Reconstructionist's* editorial board, decided that the time had come for greater organization. They gathered at Camp Cejwin in September 1938 to discuss the status and future of Reconstructionism, marking an important turning point in the development of the movement.⁷³ Plans were formulated regarding the publication of new books, pamphlets, liturgical works, and curricula for study groups. The Friends of Reconstructionism was organized in order to raise funds and solicit subscriptions to the *Reconstructionist*.⁷⁴ These tasks, along with the publication of the magazine, were later assumed by the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, established in 1940 (after Kaplan's return from Palestine).⁷⁵

In the next few years, in fact, Reconstructionists came out with several liturgical works: *Shir Hadashö*, supplementary prayers to accompany the traditional High Holiday *machzor* (1939; compiled by Eugene Kohn, and later incorporated into the Reconstructionist *High Holiday Prayerbook*); the *New Haggadah* (1940; published by Behrman House) and the *Sabbath Prayerbook* (1945; with Kaplan, Eisenstein, Milton Steinberg, and Eugene Kohn on the editorial board).⁷⁶ All of the works included modifications of the traditional liturgy which, as mentioned earlier, had been "tested" for some years at the SAJ.

As is well known, these publications provoked much controversy in the larger Jewish community. In June 1945, soon after the *Sabbath Prayerbook* appeared, members of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis, meeting in New York, burned a copy of the new *siddur* and excommunicated Kaplan in a dramatic public ceremony.⁷⁷

Even at JTS, there was growing concern among several faculty members about Kaplan and his controversial views. From the time of the *New Haggadah's* publication, Kaplan was subjected to mounting pressure from faculty members at the Seminary; some even called for his dismissal. According to Eisenstein's account, Kaplan, though deeply hurt by this treatment from respected colleagues, did not take Eisenstein's advice and resign from the Seminary at that time.

Eisenstein's view, expressed in a memorandum to Kaplan, was that "the attempt to reform Conservative Judaism from within had failed," and that it was necessary to take action and organize a fourth group (drawing upon left-wing Conservatives and right-wing Reformers); in fact, Reconstructionists, by issuing publications and spreading their views, were already taking steps in that direction. As Eisenstein concluded, "We had to make a choice. One could not play in a baseball game and act as umpire at the same time.... If we were a school of thought, we had to behave like academics and stay above the battle. On the other hand, if we were or hoped to become a movement, we had to take the kind of action which is needed if a movement is to begin."⁷⁸

In 1945, the leadership of the SAJ passed to Eisenstein, as Kaplan stepped down to "emeritus" status.⁷⁹ Other groups associating themselves with Reconstructionism had emerged; by 1945, there were four Reconstructionist fellowship chapters and forty-one study groups.⁸⁰

It was not until 1963, however, that decisive steps were taken toward denominationalism. A group of Reconstructionist supporters, meeting in Buffalo, New York, finally persuaded Kaplan, at age eighty-three, to retire from the Jewish Theological Seminary. This ultimately paved the way for the founding of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College five years later, an event, as has been mentioned, which established Reconstructionism as a separate movement in American Judaism.⁸¹

Conclusion

Given the appeal of Mordecai Kaplan's ideas and the early impetus toward organization, one wonders why it took so long for the structures of the Reconstructionist movement to be created. It appears that Kaplan was radical in thought but cautious in deed. He was reluctant, and perhaps unable, to convert his brilliant and innovative analysis of the modern Jewish situation into a full-fledged movement. Much of this reluctance had to do with his personality as an ideologue; much was related to his personal attachment to JTS. Finally, Kaplan seems to have been genuinely committed to the ideal of

k'lal yisrael (Jewish unity) and did not wish to introduce greater divisiveness into an already fragmented community.⁸²

Nevertheless, the movement seems to have taken shape despite Kaplan. My research indicates that, in the first two decades following the founding of the SAJ, the force of Kaplan's ideas swept his followers into organizational activity which, at various critical junctures, might have developed into a full-fledged denomination had it not been for Kaplan's restraining hand.

Ultimately, the attitudes of leaders of the other movements, particularly many at JTS, led to the crystallization of Reconstructionism as a separate denomination. Though Kaplan himself continued to teach at JTS, Eisenstein and Kaplan's other followers eventually felt compelled to strike out on their own.

The movement that they created has remained relatively small, though it has experienced significant growth in recent years and has been quite influential on the American Jewish scene. Reconstructionism is the only Jewish religious movement which is indigenous to this country, and it has a uniquely American character. As Kaplan predicted, many American Jews, whether consciously or not, subscribe to Reconstructionist ideas. For example, many may question the existence of a supernatural being, do not consider Jewish law to be legally binding on their lives, believe that the sacred texts of Judaism are human rather than divine creations, are committed to preserving the State of Israel, yet do not intend to settle there, and are drawn to Jewish practice (if it is convenient and meaningful) mostly out of a sense of Jewish peoplehood, which they consider to be the basis of their Jewish identity. Most believe that one can be both a good American and a good Jew, and affirm the critical importance of the separation of church and state in the United States. All of these are basic tenets of Reconstructionist ideology. As Charles Liebman observes in a now somewhat dated article (1970), "The attitudes of most American Jews are closer to Reconstructionism than to Orthodoxy, Conservatism or Reform, and... Reconstructionism comes closer than any other movement or school of thought to articulating the meaning of Judaism for American Jews."⁸³

The fact that large segments of the American Jewish community appear to accept the Reconstructionist formulation of Judaism raises the question of why most of them have not joined Reconstructionist

congregations. This apparent gap between American Jews' beliefs and behavior can tell us much about the nature of American Judaism. Are American Jews unwilling to articulate publicly or institutionally what they really believe? The history of the Reconstructionist movement offers many insights into the religious development of the American Jewish community as a whole.

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Notes

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1. Mordecai M. Kaplan, "A Program for the Reconstruction of Judaism," *Menorah Journal* 6, no. 4 (August 1920): 189.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 190.

3. Mel Scult, *Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century: A Biography of Mordecai M. Kaplan* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), p. 188.

4. Kaplan, "Program for the Reconstruction of Judaism," p. 196.

5. As Kaplan's followers recalled later, the congregation was divided between "one element refusing to function with Dr. Kaplan and the other element refusing to function without him." Minutes, SAJ Board of Directors, Dec. 21, 1921. Amid ongoing struggles, the board voted in May 1921 to retain Kaplan as rabbi, on the basis of a compromise plan which aimed to preserve the synagogue's Orthodox character (i.e., a committee appointed by the board would supervise the school, and the congregation would operate according to the *Shulchan Aruch*, though Kaplan would have the freedom to express his views). Scult, *Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century*, p. 196.

6. One Kaplan supporter, S.C. Lamport, lambasted the opposing group at the Jewish Center as follows: "There is no use in appealing to any sense of fairness on the part of the Board of Trustees of the Jewish Centre.... Shall we wait until they throw us out as they threaten or shall we go out, following our Leader, the ablest man in the Rabbinate.... There will never be a chance for reconciliation. Their mummified Judaism cannot permit it." SAJ Minutes, Dec. 21, 1921. And H. L. Simmons, chairman of the Committee of Fifteen representing the pro-Kaplan faction, declared, "The Center without the Ideals that Dr. Kaplan tried to infuse into it was a big building, with expensive furniture inside, but as empty as a drum. A Body without a Soul." *Ibid.* Speaking to his supporters at this decisive meeting, Kaplan vented his feelings: "I want to warn the people who are ready to take the next step towards establishing an institution founded on the ideals I laid down years ago, that

this is not an easy task.... To see one's ideals shattered by idle worshippers because one cannot stand for deception is indeed heartrending. They have made my life Hell because I came out with the Ideals which they knew I stood for, but did not want me to express." Ibid.

7. Among the major planks of the SAJ Platform, as it was presented by Kaplan, were "the explanation of the Torah in the light of Reason and Common-Sense," and strong support for "the idea of Palestine as a spiritual center." SAJ Minutes, Dec. 21, 1921.

8. Charles Liebman, "Reconstructionism in American Jewish Life," in Liebman, *Aspects of the Religious Behavior of American Jews* (New York: Ktav, 1965, 1974), p. 214.

9. At one of the SAJ's early meetings, H. L. Simmons, the acting chairman, proposed life tenure for Kaplan (this was later reduced to five years) "since the Society was formed for the purpose of carrying out the ideas for which Kaplan stood and for which the existence of the Society would be justified." SAJ Minutes, Jan. 29, 1922.

10. Interview with Ira Eisenstein, Aug. 28-29, 1995.

11. Eisenstein, *Reconstructing Judaism*, p. 94. Eisenstein added, "The question that puzzled me was whether they really understood what Kaplan was saying. They were certainly devoted to him, and they came forward generously whenever he called upon them to give to Jewish causes.... But the question remained: did they not lack the educational background which would qualify them to appreciate the daring new interpretations of tradition which he was formulating? In any event, I must pay tribute to the lay men and women who recognized, in some vague way, that they were creating opportunities for an earnest, gifted, and learned rabbi to grapple with the problem of Judaism in the contemporary world." Ibid.

12. SAJ Minutes, Feb. 14, 1922.

13. The congregation's membership grew to about 150 families by the end of the 1920s. Liebman, "Reconstructionism in American Jewish Life," p. 215.

14. SAJ Minutes, Mar. 13, 1922.

15. Ibid., Mar. 20, 1922.

16. Ibid., Feb. 5, 1922; Mar. 20, 1922; Sept. 18, 1922; Oct. 7, 1922.

17. Ibid., Mar. 12, 1923; Dec. 29, 1924; Dec. 5, 1927.

18. As Kaplan declared at an early SAJ meeting, "The restoration of Israel's ancient land shall be the ideal for which this synagogue will work, because the synagogue cannot stand for empty lip prayer, but uplifting work." SAJ Minutes, Dec. 21, 1921.

19. Membership in American Zionist organizations declined in the 1920s, then rose again after the mid-1930s, in reaction to the rise of Nazism. After the ZOA's Cleveland Convention in 1921, control of the movement was wrested away from the Brandeis faction and turned over to Louis Lipsky and Emanuel Neumann, Chaim Weizmann's representatives in the United States. See Henry Feingold, *Zion in America* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1974), pp. 279-281.

20. SAJ Minutes, April 20, 1925; Eisenstein, *Reconstructing Judaism*, p. 147.

21. SAJ Minutes, June 11, 1923; Mar. 1, 1926; Mar. 15, 1926; Nov. 29, 1926.

22. Ibid., Jan. 14, 1929.

23. In gaining more American subscribers to *Hashiloach*, SAJ leaders also hoped to

advance Hebrew literacy in the United States. "Facts Concerning the Growth of the SAJ, 1923-24," insert in SAJ Minutes. Also see SAJ Minutes, Nov. 5, 1923.

24. For example, in April 1923, the SAJ initiated an effort among seven congregations on the West Side to raise \$100,000 for Keren Hayesod, to be presented directly to Weizmann at a reception held in his honor. SAJ Minutes, April 9, 1923. Also see "Facts Concerning the Growth of the SAJ, 1923-24."

25. SAJ Annual Membership Meeting, May 28, 1945.

26. For example, Kaplan developed his philosophy in a series of Friday evening lectures on "Judaism as a civilization" at the SAJ in 1923-24. "Facts Concerning the Growth of the SAJ, 1923-24."

27. In proposing the development of the Code of Ethical Practice, Kaplan declared, "Judaism can be made to function not merely once a week, but every day and at all times." SAJ Annual Meeting, May 11, 1924; also see SAJ Minutes, Mar. 31, 1924; June 2, 1924.

28. Scult, *Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century*, p. 262.

29. SAJ Annual Meeting, May 11, 1924.

30. Scult, *Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century*, p. 290.

31. SAJ Minutes, Mar. 31, 1924; Sept. 8, 1924.

32. Scult, *Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century*, pp. 285-290.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 291.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 300.

35. Women at the Jewish Center, according to Scult, also participated in many important congregational ceremonies. For example, both men and women joined in completing a Torah scroll for the Center's dedication by writing in a Hebrew letter. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

36. According to Scult, Kaplan had raised the issue of Bat Mitzvah at a United Synagogue convention in 1918, but made no concrete suggestions at that time. In his later years, he stated that he had four reasons for instituting the Bat Mitzvah ceremony: his four daughters. *Ibid.*, pp. 301-302. In proposing the idea to the SAJ board on Feb. 5, 1922, Kaplan stated that, in this way, girls over age twelve "would thus be formally initiated into the folds of the Jewish people." The suggestion met with the "heartly approval of members of the Board." SAJ Minutes, Feb. 5, 1922. By May 1922, only two months after Judith Kaplan's Bat Mitzvah, the ceremony was viewed as being quite routine at the SAJ, with a prescribed course of preparation, certificate, etc. SAJ Minutes, May 3, 1922.

37. Jack Wertheimer, "The Reconstruction of Kaplanian Reconstructionism," in Wertheimer, *A People Divided: Judaism in Contemporary America* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), p. 163. Also see Eisenstein, *Reconstructing Judaism*, p. 116, on this issue.

38. SAJ Annual Membership Meeting, May 28, 1945.

39. The SAJ affiliated with the United Synagogue in November 1923, sent delegates to the annual United Synagogue conventions, and participated in fund-raising campaigns for the Jewish Theological Seminary. SAJ Minutes, Oct. 22, 1923; Nov. 26, 1923; April 20, 1925; Mar. 4, 1935.

40. At the group's first meeting, in August 1914, Kaplan called for "the recon-

struction of Judaism on the basis of natural human experience." Scult, *Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century*, p. 180.

41. Ibid., pp. 179–191.

42. For the full story of the Kaplan-Wise negotiations, see *ibid.*, pp. 268–276.

43. Ira Eisenstein believed that the key factors motivating Kaplan's decision to remain at the Seminary at that time were his need for stability in order to work on his magnum opus and his love for the Seminary. He speculated about the consequences of this decision for the future of the Reconstructionist movement. Eisenstein, *Reconstructing Judaism*, pp. 59–60.

44. Ibid., pp. 283–284.

45. By January 1925, when Kaplan visited the Scranton group of about seventy people drawn from the study groups of two different congregations (led by Rabbi Max Arzt and Rabbi Bernard Heller) and one study group from the local YMHA, they had already decided to associate themselves with the SAJ. As Kaplan noted, "this was a very significant beginning of the expansion of the SAJ beyond the confines of our own building." SAJ Minutes, Jan. 5, 1925.

Rabbi Arzt reported a month later that the group was very enthusiastic and was doing well. Commenting on the intellectual challenge of Kaplan's ideas, he declared, "The entire community was returning to school!" SAJ Minutes, Feb. 2, 1925.

46. SAJ Minutes, Jan. 5, 1925; Mar. 9, 1925; Annual Meeting, May 10, 1925; July 22, 1926; Oct. 8, 1928. Kaplan had especially high hopes for the group in Temple Bethel in Manhattan Beach. In his words, "It can be used as a laboratory for working out a new type of service." SAJ Minutes, Oct. 22, 1928.

According to Eisenstein, however, these "branches" of the SAJ that sprouted up in the 1920s were not very well organized: "They [the various groups] had no staff, no budget, no program. They didn't know what to do as branches of the Society.... Kaplan wasn't strong on organization. He was so convinced of the power of the printed word.... But the word got spread; there was no question about that." Interview with Ira Eisenstein, August 28–29, 1995.

47. "New Plans for the SAJ" (1925; SAJ Records.)

48. SAJ Minutes, Oct. 8, 1928.

49. Kaplan envisioned such a magazine as early as 1922. SAJ Minutes, Mar. 27, 1922; April 11, 1922.

The magazine was widely viewed as critical for the dissemination of Reconstructionist ideas. As Mrs. Alderman, an SAJ member, put it in 1928, "The *SAJ Review* attempts to recreate and reconstruct Judaism. The SAJ ... is an immortal movement. In order to live, we must become big, and the *SAJ Review* is one of the means of our becoming nationally known." SAJ Members' Meeting, Jan. 17, 1928.

Around the same time that the *SAJ Review* appeared, Kaplan's pamphlet *Toward a Reconstruction of Judaism* was sent to the entire SAJ membership. SAJ Minutes, Mar. 19, 1928.

50. During this discussion, one board member, Mr. Winkler, proposed engaging a

"field secretary" to serve as a liaison between the out-of-town chapters and New York. SAJ Minutes, Oct. 8, 1928.

51. SAJ Minutes, Oct. 22, 1928.

52. Ibid., May 28, 1928.

53. Ibid., Mar. 19, 1928; April 9, 1928.

54. A few months later, Kaplan elaborated on the standards which he expected of members of this Council: They "will preach, teach and write in the spirit of the SAJ program. A rabbi associated with the Council would teach from his pulpit rather than only preach.... A social worker connected with the Council would aim at doing not only Americanization work, in the narrow sense of the word, but would aim to instill Jewish consciousness in the minds of the people." SAJ Minutes, Oct. 8, 1928.

In fact, as Scult points out, Kaplan had already begun organizing such a Council among his Seminary colleagues at the RA convention in 1926. The group of interested followers included Max Kadushin, Solomon Goldman, Simon Greenberg, Moses Hadas, Max Arzt, Morris Silverman, and Louis Levitsky. Although some members of the group (especially Kadushin) advocated breaking from the RA (and forming a new party), Kaplan assured a furious Louis Finkelstein that this would not happen, and that no one would be admitted to the Council who was not also an RA member. Scult, *Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century*, pp. 276-277.

55. Interestingly, the SAJ board members stressed the importance of lay involvement in the spread of Reconstructionist ideas: "If the SAJ movement is to become a reality in America, it can only be when laymen will be obsessed with the importance and significance of this project." SAJ Minutes, Oct. 8, 1928.

56. As Scult commented, "In later years, Kaplan always claimed that he desired to establish a school of thought and not a denomination, but the first decade of the SAJ shows that its real status remained unresolved." Scult, *Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century*, p. 256.

57. SAJ, Annual Members' Meeting, May 9, 1928.

58. Ibid., May 25, 1930.

59. Ibid., May 26, 1929.

60. Scult, *Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century*, p. 277.

61. Eisenstein added that he sometimes disagreed with Kaplan regarding strategy: "I bought his [Kaplan's] ideology one hundred per-cent. I couldn't find fault with any of it. The idea of God, Torah, evolution, the idea of taking ritual out of Halacha.... But he didn't know what to do with it, and that's where we had our major differences." Interview with Ira Eisenstein, Aug. 28-29, 1995.

As Mel Scult observed, "Many Kaplan followers had considered going denominational for a long time, but the man most responsible for this important development was Ira Eisenstein." Scult, *Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century*, p. 362.

62. Eisenstein, *Reconstructing Judaism*, pp. 70-71.

63. Ibid., p. 161.

64. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, vol. 2 (New York: Image Books, 1975), pp. 392-394, 398-400. Also see Emanuel S. Goldsmith, "Kaplan and Henry Nelson Wieman," in *The American Judaism of Mordecai M. Kaplan*,

ed. Emanuel S. Goldsmith, Mel Scult, and Robert M. Seltzer (New York: New York University Press, 1990), pp. 197–220.

65. Scult, *Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century*, p. 342.

66. Mordecai M. Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization: Toward a Reconstruction of American-Jewish Life* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), *passim*.

67. Scult, *Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century*, pp. 343–346. As Scult noted, “After Kaplan, there was a new way to think about Judaism and its relationship to the Jewish people. No one... had defined Judaism in terms of peoplehood and at the same time concentrated on a reworking of the religious aspects of Jewish civilization in terms of contemporary categories of thought. Dedicated American Jews, struggling to make sense out of their lives in America, welcomed Kaplan’s teachings with profound enthusiasm and gratitude.” *Ibid.*, p. 341.

68. Eisenstein, *Reconstructing Judaism*, pp. 136–137. Eisenstein elaborated on this point in a recent interview: “He [Kaplan] was ready to publish the book and say, ‘Okay, you’re on your own.’ It became clear quite soon that they weren’t doing it and that not everybody was reading the book and a lot of people were reading it and didn’t understand it... one of the first things I did... was to make the book available to people on their level.” Interview with Ira Eisenstein, Aug. 28–29, 1995.

69. The first issue appeared on January 11, 1935. Eisenstein, *Reconstructing Judaism*, pp. 137, 139.

70. *Ibid.*, pp. 138–139.

71. Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, p. xiii.

72. Eisenstein pointed out that later, with the establishment of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, the magazine receded in importance as a hub of the movement. Interview with Ira Eisenstein, Aug. 28–29, 1995.

Eisenstein discussed the influence of the magazine at a meeting of SAJ leaders in 1939: “To what extent is the Society more than a synagogue.... I would say that it is because we had looked beyond the confines of our four walls and published the magazine... whatever influence we will have on Jewish life today and in the future depends upon the extent to which we render our work permanent. At the end of a year in the SAJ I shall have preached perhaps forty sermons. These sermons influence only the few people in the synagogue, but when they are reprinted in the magazine as an editorial or an article, they have permanent value.” *SAJ Minutes*, April 12, 1939.

73. Some sixty people attended this conference, notable because it was the first such gathering held without Kaplan. Eisenstein, *Reconstructing Judaism*, p. 150.

74. This was a group of supporters stemming from the SAJ and the Park Avenue Synagogue, organized by Rabbi Milton Steinberg. The group was dissolved with the establishment of the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation in 1940.

75. The JRF provided scholarships to creative individuals to support the production of educational and liturgical materials, published the magazine, and sent speakers to explain Reconstructionism to various groups. Eisenstein, *Reconstructing Judaism*, p. 153; Marc Lee Raphael, *Profiles in American Judaism* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), p. 190.

76. The *Sabbath Prayerbook* had been experimented with at the SAJ (in looseleaf-binder format) for three years prior to its publication. Eisenstein, *Reconstructing Judaism*, pp. 176-177.

77. The ceremony took place at the McAlpin Hotel in New York City. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

78. *Ibid.*, pp. 165-167.

79. SAJ Minutes, Oct. 5, 1944; Jan. 16, 1945.

80. The four congregations became the nucleus of the Reconstructionist Federation of Congregations, established in 1955 (including synagogues and fellowships that were then required to maintain dual affiliation with another American Jewish movement). Raphael, *Profiles in American Judaism*, p. 191.

The name of this body was later changed to the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Fellowships/Havurot (1961) and the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation (1995).

81. Eisenstein, *Reconstructing Judaism*, pp. 216-219.

82. Reconstructionism would, in his view, "provide a rationale and a program for that conception of Jewish unity which might enable Jews to transcend the differences that divide them, assuming, of course, that they are aware of having at least one thing in common, the desire to remain Jews." Mordecai M. Kaplan, preface to *The Jewish Reconstructionist Papers* (New York: Behrman's Jewish Book House, 1936), p. v. Also see Scult, *Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century*, p. 184.

83. Liebman, "Reconstructionism in American Jewish Life," p. 4.

Walter Jonas Judah and New York's 1798 Yellow Fever Epidemic

Theodore Cohen

Nestled within a group of old tenement houses in close proximity to the Manhattan Bridge is the Chatham Square cemetery. It was the first burial site for the members of Congregation Shearith Israel and is the oldest Jewish cemetery in North America.¹ This plot of land was granted to the Jewish residents of New Amsterdam in 1656 by the unfriendly Peter Stuyvesant,² then director-general of New Netherland. The oldest grave is probably that of Benjamin Bueno de Mesquita, which is dated 1683, and whose possible relative Joseph is credited with having made the original purchase of the site.³ Among others, there are the graves of several Revolutionary War soldiers, of Gershom Mendes Seixas, America's most noted Jewish spiritual leader at the time, and of Walter Jonas Judah, one of America's first Jewish medical students, who risked and then lost his life in the yellow fever epidemic that scourged New York City in 1798. His story was not a major epic—he was less than twenty-one years old when he died—but it constitutes an interesting episode in the history of early American Jewry.

The Scourge

Yellow fever epidemics were among the most lethal and horrifying of all the outbreaks which repeatedly raged through colonial America's coastal cities, particularly New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston.⁴ They also created havoc along the Gulf Coast and traveled up the Mississippi into the great valley.⁵

The disease occurs in two epidemiological patterns, the urban and the sylvan (jungle). It is transmitted from person to person by the bite of a virus-infected *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, a species which breeds best in filthy, stagnant water, especially in warmer weather. It was also transported into Temperate Zone cities on ships sailing from

tropical ports. The mosquito still travels by small boat, airplane, and car, especially in the form of dried eggs carried on used tires.⁶

Following a three- to six-day incubation period, the classical clinical picture begins with a three-day period of infection, which is ushered in with fever, chills, generalized aching, and minor nose and gum bleeding. Then follows a twenty-four-hour period of remission of symptoms, and subsequently a severe period of intoxication with fever, vomiting, abdominal pain, yellow skin (jaundice), kidney failure, coma, and death in as many as 50 percent of cases, usually between the seventh and tenth days.⁷

Nowadays, the only specific treatment for yellow fever is immunization, which usually confers lifelong immunity to more than 90 percent of those who receive it,⁸ but the vaccine did not exist in the eighteenth century. Interestingly, even in the present day, once the disease has developed there is no known agent which will kill the virus and cure the patient.

The Epidemic of 1798

The onset of the epidemic in New York in 1798 was near the waterfront. It began in mid-July and continued into November. In some areas of the city not a single family escaped, and with few exceptions, every house had at least one victim. Normal life was entirely disrupted, and before it was over, the disease claimed 2,086 persons,⁹ ten of them Jewish.¹⁰ "Faced with the pestilence, the Common Council of the city appointed a special committee to assist the health commissioner, and along with the physicians, to take means to help the sick and indigent." Where necessary, the patients were to be admitted to Bellevue Hospital.¹¹

Individuals who failed "to keep the streets clean before their respective doors" were to be penalized. It is of interest that the epidemic's association with "stagnant water in confined places, during hot weather,"¹² had been observed, but that no one had yet noted the association with the mosquito. A local newspaper writer at the time was reminded "of the people of Germany during the great plague of 1349, who not understanding the cause of such unusual mortality and credulously listening to an idle malicious report, that the Jews had poisoned the wells, rose and massacred the unfortunate

and innocent Israelites.”¹³ Fortunately, such a horror was not inflicted upon New York’s Jews in 1798. They had only to cope with the situation — like everyone else.

What was the Jewish experience during the outbreak? Gershom Mendes Seixas, the community’s leader, urged that a special fund be established from the Sedakah (charity fund) to aid the sick and poor of the congregation during the time that the trustees were absent from the city.¹⁴ A year later, at a public thanksgiving and prayer meeting, he recalled:

Again the visitation of an epidemic which though it has not been attended with the same degree of fatality as formerly, still it has been carried with it the same formidable appearance, compelled the Citizens to quit their usual places of residence & to flee for refuge to the country towns and villages, where they have been obliged to put up with many inconveniences, and attended with great expense — The Man of business relinquishes the advantages of trade, & the poorer Class of people most inevitably in their pecuniary circumstances, so that we may truly say, that every individual (either in a greater or a lesser degree) have felt the bad effects of this direful malady. These sufferings call loudly on us for a strict reformation ... let us also keep in mind that although our small congregation was driven from our public place of worship, and dispersed in various parts of the country there was yet an opportunity for a greater number of them to assemble in union to observe the appointed times & festivals instituted by divine Authority, agreeably to the rites and ceremonies of our forefathers. To pretend to specify all the particular blessings we enjoyed amidst the terrific evil of the late epidemic would be descending too much in the minutia of things: suffice it to say in general terms, that we had a regular supply of the real necessities of life, though attended somewhat with more difficulty than common in the procuring of them.¹⁵

Youth and Family Background

How and why Walter Jonas Judah became medically involved in

the epidemic is unknown. Although he had not completed his medical training as yet, he might have been provoked by a sense of responsibility or benevolence for his fellow man. Certainly he was not following any sort of family medical tradition. On the contrary, Walter came from very ordinary beginnings.

Walter's paternal grandparents had migrated to America from Breslau. His father, Samuel, who was born in New York, had married London-born Jesse Jonas on December 19, 1759. They were the parents of fourteen children, the youngest of whom was Walter Jonas, born April 4, 1778.¹⁶

In his early youth, the family moved to Philadelphia, possibly as a result of the British occupation of New York. When Walter was three and a half years old, his father died. Samuel Judah left his widow with twelve surviving children and essentially no estate. Benjamin, the eldest son, assumed the role of head of the family, which in 1783 returned to New York after the British left. Matriarch Jessie supported the family through several business ventures, including real estate. She and her children were members of the Shearith Israel congregation. As conditions improved, she was able to give Walter more time than some of her older children had received.¹⁷

At about sixteen and a half years of age, Walter began to pursue a medical career.¹⁸ One can only conjecture as to what motivated this decision, beyond the sense of the importance of education so typical of Jewish families. We do know, however, that the quest for higher education presented some special problems for Jewish students at this time, since all of colonial America's twenty-five colleges had been founded primarily for the purpose of training young men for the Christian clergy, and their curricula and tone, in various ways, reflected their origins.¹⁹

Certainly, a degree of pioneering spirit was imperative for Walter, since there were few Jewish matriculants in the colleges, probably due in part to the country's small Jewish population and the remoteness of its largest Jewish communities from most of the institutions of higher learning. More than half of America's Jews lived in South Carolina and Georgia, neither of which had a college or professional school.²⁰ Huhner, however, points out that given the size of the colonial Jewish population, the number of Jews attending college was greater than might have been anticipated.²¹

Becoming a Physician in the Eighteenth Century

Medical education and practice were primitive in the colonial era. Aside from the highly undeveloped state of the science, most colonial practitioners were products of an unstructured and unsupervised apprenticeship system which was often combined with other occupations, such as barbering, the magistracy, butchering, and, especially in New England, the ministry.²² By the beginning of the Revolutionary War, there were approximately 3,500 practicing physicians in the colonies, of whom not more than 400 had M.D. degrees.²³ Formally trained medical school graduates came from two sources: colonists who had gone to Europe to study and then returned;²⁴ and immigrant physicians.²⁵

There were two medical schools in the colonies in the mid-eighteenth century: the College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania), founded in 1765;²⁶ and the Medical School of King's College (now Columbia University), founded in 1767.²⁷ Both were patterned after European medical schools, especially Edinburgh.²⁸

Before the end of the century, three additional medical schools began to function: Harvard in 1782,²⁹ the medical department of Queen's (Rutgers) College in New Jersey in 1792,³⁰ and Dartmouth in 1797.³¹ In all likelihood, Walter chose King's College because of its proximity to where he lived.

Walter was not the first Jew in the medical profession in New York City. There were several doctors before him. Drs. Nunez and Elias Woolin appear on the rolls of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in 1742. Dr. Woolin, who arrived from Bohemia in 1740, boasted of having served four years as a surgeon in the Imperial army. In 1742, Dr. Jacob Isaac from Germany advertised "wonderful cures." Dr. Levy's name appears in the congregation's records in 1750, as did Dr. Andrew Judah, who went to South Carolina, where he claimed to have been from London and Holland also.³²

The first New York City Directory, published in 1786, lists the names of Drs. Barney Cowan and Saul Israel. Dr. Israel professed to be a Curer of Deafness. Drs. Leo Wolf and Hyman Isaac Long are also listed in Shearith Israel's records. Dr. Long was originally from the island of Jamaica and was also involved in Masonic activities in New York, Virginia, and South Carolina.³³ A somewhat better known late-

eighteenth-century New York physician was Dr. Isaac Abrahams. He deserves recognition for having been the first Jew to graduate from King's College (Bachelor of Arts, 1774), but there is no record of his having attended medical school.³⁴ His medical training, presumably, was by apprenticeship.

Walter's attendance at King's College from 1794 to 1798 makes him one of the first identifiable Jews to attend a medical school in New York. A review of early New York medical school records reveals the name of an Isaac Bloom, who was a student at King's from 1791 to 1792. This could have been a Jewish name, but there is no further information about him.³⁵ Also listed in attendance from 1791 to 1796 was London-born Bernard Samuel Judah.³⁶ He was not naturalized until 1799,³⁷ three years after he left medical school. Although Bernard did not graduate, he lived in New York and was referred to as a surgeon and druggist.³⁸ Accordingly, Walter appears to be the first identifiable American-born Jew, as well as the second identifiable Jew, to have attended a medical school in New York. One may assume that Walter and Bernard knew each other, since both men were students at the medical school (which had very few students compared to nowadays) at the same time, and they may have been related.³⁹

Walter is recorded as being at King's College in 1794 and in the medical school from '95 to '96, and '97 to '98.⁴⁰ At that time, it was customary for students to pay the professors directly in order to attend their lectures.⁴¹ This explains the following entries by Walter's brother Benjamin, who maintained the family accounts:

May 27, 1795—Cash paid Dr. Samuel Bunon \$100, Doer not wishing public the fee, it being \$150, for my brother Walter a student.

November 17, 1797—To cash Walter attending lectures at college. £ 16

Aug. 10, 1798—Cash Walter's attending Dr. Hosack's lectures £ 6⁴²

Walter is not listed as having been in school in 1796–97,⁴³ nor do the family records indicate any payment that year for his education. Possibly he did not attend school for a time, or he may have been

serving an apprenticeship, since the records indicate that Walter was an apprentice to two New York doctors. One of them, Dr. David Hosack, a very well known and respected physician, was the attending doctor at the famous Hamilton-Burr duel.⁴⁴

The rather large sum paid to Dr. Bunon late in the 1795 academic year may have been for an apprenticeship, since \$100 was the usual apprenticeship fee at the time;⁴⁵ whereas the fee for a lecture series was \$15.⁴⁶ Whatever his reason for not attending school in 1796-97, it is apparent that Walter planned to continue his medical education, since the last payment for Dr. Hosack's lectures was made on August 10, 1798, only thirty-six days before his death.

Walter Judah's Death

When the yellow fever epidemic began to devastate New York that summer, Walter could easily have left the city, as so many others were doing.⁴⁷ Instead, as a medical student undoubtedly aware of the risk involved, he joined in the effort to help the sick. Walter Judah not only was willing to give of his expertise and place his life in jeopardy, but even contributed from his personal finances so that those afflicted could purchase medication.⁴⁸

In September, the average daily death rate was thirty-eight persons.⁴⁹ On the fifteenth day of that month, one of the victims was Walter Jonas Judah.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, he had succumbed to that which he had sought to assuage.

In the family records kept by Benjamin, we read an entry dated April 16, 1808: "Tombstone for my brother Walter work and materials erected May 1801 £ 38.0.9.22."⁵¹

Both the tomb and its inscription may have been prepared abroad.⁵² The grave marker is a most unusual one. In characteristic Sephardic tradition, which was dominant in the Shearith Israel congregation, Walter's horizontal stone lies flat on the tomb. Carved into its head is the angel of death suspended over the city's skyline and wielding a flaming sword. On the right side, an arm extruding from the clouds with an axe in its hand is felling the tree of life. His epitaph reads:



Tombstone of Walter Jonas Judah

(courtesy of Theodore Cohen)

In memory of
Walter J. Judah
student of physic, who worn down
by his exertions to alleviate the
sufferings of his fellow citizens
in that dreadful contagion
that visited the City of New York
in 1798 fell a victim in the cause
of humanity on the 5th of Tishri
A.M. 5559 corresponding
with the 15th of September 1798
aet 20 years 5 months
and 11 days.

Here lies buried / The unmarried man- / Old in wisdom, tender
in years / Skilled he was in his labor, the labor of healing /
Strengthening himself as a lion and running swiftly as a hart to
bring healing / To the inhabitants of this city treating them
with loving kindness / When they were visited with the yellow
fever / He gave money from his own purse to buy for them
beneficent medicines / But the good that he did was the cause
of his death / For the fever visited him while yet a youth in his
twenty-first year / Declare him and his soul happy May they
prepare for him his canopy in Paradise / And there may he have
refreshment of soul until the dead live again and the spirit
reenter into them / Joshua the son of Samuel / departed hence
/ on the holy Sabbath day of the 5 of Tishri / in the year / And
thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days (5559
Daniel XII, 13) / May his soul be bound up in the bond of life.⁵³

Thus, Walter Jonas Judah merits special recognition in Jewish
American history as an individual imbued with a sense of civic
obligation and charity, as well as a medical pioneer and martyr. By
his deeds, he also fulfilled a religious tenet, for in the Talmud it is
written, "He who saves a single life is said to have saved the entire
world."⁵⁴

Theodore Cohen is clinical associate professor of medicine at the New York University School of Medicine and Post-Graduate Medical School. He dedicates this paper to the memory of Professor Maxwell L. Gelfand, extraordinary clinician, teacher, author, and perennial student.

Notes

1. Rosalie S. Phillips, "A Burial Place for the Jewish Nation Forever," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 18 (1909): 93.
2. David de Sola Pool, *Portraits Etched in Stone* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), p. vii.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 188. Pool is uncertain about the relationship between the two, if indeed there was one.
4. John Duffy, *Epidemics in Colonial America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), p. 138.
5. Henry Rightor, *Standard History of New Orleans* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1900), pp. 203-214.
6. James B. Wyngaarden, Lloyd H. Smith, Jr., and J. Claude Bennett, eds., *Cecil Textbook of Medicine*, 19th ed., 2 vols. (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders, 1992), 2:1879.
7. Bernard N. Fields and David M. Knite, eds., *Virology*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (New York: Raven Press, 1996), 1:1011-12.
8. Wyngaarden et al., *Cecil Textbook of Medicine*, 2:1881.
9. James Hardie, *An Account of the Yellow Fever Which Occurred in the City of New York in the Year 1822* (New York: Samuel Marks, 1822), pp. 2, 5, 6.
10. Pool, *Portraits Etched in Stone*, p. 271.
11. *Minutes of the Common Council (1784-1831)*, 2:467-468. Entry of September 10, 1798, as cited in Isaac N. P. Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498-1909* (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1915), 5:1356.
12. Hardie, *Account of the Yellow Fever*, pp. 3-4.
13. *New York Spectator* 50, no. 94 (Saturday, August 18, 1798).
14. Pool, *Portraits Etched in Stone*, p. 362.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 271-272.
16. Malcolm H. Stern, *First American Jewish Families* (Baltimore: Ottenheimer, 1991), p. 139.
17. Pool, *Portraits Etched in Stone*, pp. 269, 393.
18. The premedical requirements are described in William Frederick Norwood, *Medical Education in the United States Before the Civil War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944), p. 110. Judah apparently completed them during the 1794 academic year since he is listed on p. 118 in the Columbia Catalogue, under "Non-Graduates in Arts," as follows: 1794-: Med. 1795-1796, 1797-1798. On p. 182, he is listed under "Non-Graduates in Medicine," 1795-1796, 1797-1798. Milton S. Halsey, *Columbia University Officers and Alumni, 1754-1857* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936).

19. John Marshall Barker, *Colleges in America* (Cleveland, 1894), p. 48, as cited by Leon Huhner, "Jews in Connection with the Colleges of the Thirteen Original States Prior to 1800," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 19 (1910): 101-102.
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21. Huhner, "Jews in Connection with the Colleges," p. 101.
22. Norwood, *Medical Education in the United States*, p. 9; Daniel Boorstin, *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (New York: Random House, 1958), pp. 231-232.
23. Joseph M. Toner, *Contributions to the Annals of Medical Progress and Medical Education in the United States, Before and During the War of Independence* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1874), pp. 9-10; Nathan S. Davis, *History of Medical Education and Institutions in the United States of America* (Chicago: S. C. Griggs, 1851), pp. 9-10.
24. Boorstin, *The Americans*, p. 230.
25. Norwood, *Medical Education in the United States*, p. 10.
26. *Directory of American Medical Education, 1993-94*, 40th ed. (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Medical Colleges, 1993), p. 194.
27. Norwood, *Medical Education in the United States*, p. 111.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *American Medical Colleges*, p. 94.
30. John H. Raven, *Catalogue of the Officers and Alumni of Rutgers College* (Trenton, N. J.: State Gazette Publishing Co., 1916), p. 62; and David L. Cowan, *Medical Education: The Queens-Rutgers Experience, 1792-1830*. (New Brunswick, N.J.: State University Bicentennial Commission and the Rutgers Medical School, 1966).
31. *American Medical Colleges*, p. 128.
32. Leon Huhner, "Jews in the Legal and Medical Professions in America Prior to 1800," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 22 (1914): 160-163.
33. H. Morrison, "The Early Jewish Physicians in America," *Medical Life*, October 1928, pp. 6-7.
34. Jacob R. Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985*, 4 vols. (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1989), 1:410, 428.
35. *Columbia University Officers and Alumni*, p. 180.
36. *Ibid.* p. 180.
37. Stern, *First American Jewish Families*, p. 141.
38. Marcus, *United States Jewry*, 1:87.
39. Anne Josephs, *Heritage of a Patriarch* (Quebec City: Septentrion Publisher, 1995).
40. See above, n. 18.
41. Norwood, *Medical Education in the United States*, p. 392.
42. Pool. *Portraits Etched in Stone*, p. 270.
43. *Columbia University Officers and Alumni*, p. 182.
44. Marcus, *United States Jewry*, 1:428. In the New York Academy of Medicine,

there is a handwritten booklet by Dr. David Hosack entitled "List of Private Pupils Educated in the Office of D. Hosack from the Year 1795." On page 2, among the students in 1795, is the name "Wm. Jonas," who entered between November 6 and 23. Whether or not this was Walter Jonas Judah is speculative. No one named Judah was mentioned by Dr. Hosack.

45. Norwood, *Medical Education in the United States*, p. 33.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 392.

47. Hardie, *Account of the Yellow Fever*, p. 4.

48. Pool, *Portraits Etched in Stone*, p. 269.

49. Hardie, *Account of the Yellow Fever*, p. 4.

50. *New York Spectator*, September 19, 1798. Under the column of Monday, September 17, entitled "Died Yesterday," appears the name Mr. Walter Judah. His tombstone (see text) gives September 15 as the date of death. The one-day discrepancy is more likely an error by the newspaper than by the family.

51. Pool, *Portraits Etched in Stone*, p. 270.

52. Marcus, *United States Jewry*, 4:366.

53. Pool, *Portraits Etched in Stone*, p. 269.

54. Tractate Sanhedrin 37a.

Rediscovering Tucacas

Mordecai Arbell

The settlement of Jews in Tucacas, on the northern coast of Venezuela, is one of the most enigmatic chapters of Jewish history in the Caribbean basin. There are so few sources on this settlement that until very recently, historians who relied only on Jewish sources were not even certain that a Jewish settlement there had ever existed.

Tucacas is situated in a mountainous region and is a key surrounded by two rivers, making access from the interior of Venezuela quite difficult. From the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Venezuelan coast was raided by Dutch ships seeking locally produced salt (a much-needed commodity in this period) and fish. The Spanish authorities had few ships or troops. Given these conditions, cruel battles were part of life on the Venezuelan coast. In 1622 the Dutch were defeated on the coast at Araya, and in 1623 driven from the island of Margarita.¹ The Dutch attacked several times up the Orinoco River, wreaking great havoc in 1624 on towns and Catholic churches. As a report written in 1637 described the situation: "the settlers are weeping ... and so all Christianity. ... all the images and temples were burned, and the ornaments looted."²

With the occupation of Curaçao in 1634, and then of the islands of Bonaire and Aruba, the Dutch obtained bases very near the Venezuelan coast. This made Spanish defensive efforts much more difficult. It also made the Venezuelan coast the center of the so-called illicit or contraband trade between Curaçao and the Spanish colonies on the South American mainland.

The illicit trade was not actually very illegal. Mostly it was carried out with the knowledge of the local authorities. The Spanish settlers needed foodstuffs and European goods. Since Spain could not provide these, permits were given locally to trade with the Curaçao merchants. At the same time Spanish warships continually attacked Dutch vessels, disrupting this trade. The Dutch historian Goslinga tells us that "although Curaçao Jews were carrying on ac-

tive trade with the nearest English and French colonies, the principal market was the Spanish mainland: the coast of Venezuela and Colombia.”³

Sometimes, on their own initiative, Spanish captains captured Dutch ships coming from Curaçao and made prisoners of the Jews and Protestants on board. The prisoners, terrified lest they be handed over to the Inquisition, paid high ransoms for their release, and their goods were confiscated. For the Spanish entrepreneurs, it was good business. The Dutch, for their part, saw the need to have a base on the Venezuelan coast to which merchant ships could be escorted from Curaçao. This base was Tucacas.

According to Cantor Corcos of the Curaçao Jewish congregation:

In the year 1693 a party of Hebrews, about ninety, left Curaçao and set sail for America. These families established themselves in Newport.... In that same year another number of Israelites left Curaçao for Venezuela. The majority of these, however, were Italians... emigrated from Leghorn, ... [who] came to Curaçao, from where they went to Tucacas, where they established and formed themselves into a congregation⁴

Corcos writes that this group was made up of Jews who had originally settled in Cayenne. However, as most of the Cayenne Jews went to Surinam, it is more reasonable to believe that they were Jews from Leghorn who had settled in Tobago or Pomeroun and had then gone to Curaçao. Other groups must also have left Curaçao for Tucacas. From the documents of the island's Sadaca society, which helped Jews in transit, we know that it provided assistance, beginning in 1715, to Jews settling in Tucacas⁵

The Spanish governor of Caracas, José Francisco de Canas, states in his reports to the king:

In the first years of the eighteenth century the Dutch established themselves on the key of Tucacas. This place became a major center of smuggling to the people in the valleys of Barquisimeto, Barinas, Turiamo, Coro, and even including Santa Fe [Bogota, Colombia] and Quito [Ecuador].⁶ The Jews participate actively

in this settlement, where they have built houses, raise cattle, have constructed a fortress and even a synagogue.... At the same time they inform Curaçao about the activities of the Spanish authorities?

The historian of Venezuela, Arausz Monfante, says that despite the many efforts by Venezuela's governors to dislodge the intruders, Tucacas remained, until the middle of the eighteenth century, a kind of lawless island, a highly preferred locale for illegal transactions.⁸

As for the difficulty of capturing Tucacas, the Spanish commander in Coro wrote the governor in Caracas:

Tucacas [is] a place in the hands of the Dutch, and luckily for them, they know the entry and exit, as they have built by hand, by closing some of the keys with very notable capacity.⁹

The economic situation in Venezuela resulting from the illicit trade in Tucacas was described by a newly appointed governor of Caracas soon after he took up his post:

I found this province very poor and deteriorated because of the continuing trade with the Dutch that takes away money and fruit in exchange for their products ... the enemies of Your Majesty become rich taking away whole fleets, exploiting the infidelity of some Spaniards.... The Dutch have settled on our coast called Tucacas, where they have homes and cattle.¹⁰

He also describes the volume of commerce: "The Dutch and the Jews cannot do business so freely in Amsterdam as they do here in the valleys, ports, coasts of Caracas [province]."

The Dutch enclave was under the command of Jorge Christian, who called himself the "Marquis of Tucacas." He was in charge of the commerce and defense.

The mayor of Coro, Juan Jacobo Montero de Espinos, who saw Tucacas as a foreign intrusion, described its commerce in 1711.

Twelve thousand bales of cacao grown in the Venezuelan valleys, tobacco, and the most important: silver, gold, and emeralds from Quito, Popayan [Colombia], and Santa Fe [Bogota], and the exporters come themselves to Tucacas to purchase what they need.

In 1710, with the aid of 150 Indians armed with bows and arrows, Montero had attacked the "houses of the Jews on the mainland and killed their cattle." He had failed, however, to reach the houses and depots on the key, which was defended by four armed ships, with heavily armed crews. On his way back to Coro, he had seized several mule trains carrying cacao beans to Tucacas.¹¹

To Montero's surprise, his actions were received coolly by Governor Rojas. Moreover, Lieutenant Governor Nicolas Sanchez attacked the villages of the Indians who had participated in the attack on Tucacas and dispersed them.

Governor Canas took more effective steps to stop the illegal trade. In 1712, frustrated by the impossibility of capturing Tucacas, he prohibited the transportation of merchandise on the road from Coro to Tucacas. Soon after a train of sixty mules was stopped and its leaders arrested; they were condemned to death and executed.¹² Canas hoped that terror tactics of this kind would stop the commerce with Tucacas.

When Canas closed the three navigable canals giving access to Tucacas, part of the populace began to abandon it. Tucacas was repopulated after Canas was replaced.

In 1717, the new governor of Caracas, Marcos Francisco de Betancourt, decided to lead a punitive expedition "against the Jews and Dutch in Tucacas, invading it by land and sea, but could not proceed for lack of soldiers and because the inhabitants of Tucacas were alerted to the coming invasion by their Spanish friends."¹³

In this second stage in the settlement of Tucacas, a permanent synagogue was built. Samuel Hebreo was elected head of the Jewish community and had the title of "senor de las Tucacas."¹⁴ This indicates the influence the Jews had there.

During this period of renewed prosperity, the congregation of the Jews of Tucacas, Santa Irmandad ("The Holy Brotherhood"), sent a

letter to Mikve Israel in Curaçao, dated September 2, 1720 and signed by Samuel Gradis Gabay.¹⁵ Enclosed were 340 pesos as a gift for the purpose of purchasing a Torah scroll with ornaments for the use of the Curaçao congregation—a gesture of appreciation for the help the Tucacas community had received from the Curaçao congregation.¹⁶

One of the main commodities in the trade with Tucacas was cacao. Interestingly, the cacao beans were purchased in Venezuela but processed in Curaçao by Jewish experts who, like many Jews elsewhere in the Caribbean, specialized in cacao and vanilla processing. Afterwards, the cacao was exported to Europe, one of the destinations being Spain itself.¹⁷ This shows the extent to which Spain was disconnected from its colonies. It has been calculated that there was a 45 percent gap between the prices of legal Spanish imports and the clandestine imports through Tucacas and Curaçao.¹⁸

The Spanish Caracas Company wanted a monopoly on foreign trade, but its possibilities and facilities were limited. Creole planters had to wait months for available shipping space to export their products. They preferred Tucacas because cargoes could be shipped there more rapidly and imported goods could be obtained from the local merchants. The Caracas Company dispatched armed ships to stop the illicit trade and pressured the governors to act against Tucacas. The creoles, in turn, kept up constant pressure on the government to ignore the trade through Tucacas. Some Spanish officials took action against Tucacas, others did not. As already mentioned, for example, the mayor of Coro who attacked Tucacas in 1710 was reprimanded by the governor in Caracas, who saw the Tucacas trade as beneficial. As for the slave trade, it remained strictly forbidden to anyone except the West India Company, and the Tucacas Jews refrained from participating in it.

At the end of 1717, the province of Venezuela became part of the viceroyalty of Nueva Granada, extending from Guiana to Quito. The viceroy, Jorge de Villalonga, after receiving complaints from the Capuchin prefect of the missionaries, Fray Gabriel of Barcelona, that many of his officials and some of the clergy were involved in the contraband trade, punished the president and staff of the Audiencia of Panama, and removed some of the officials of Cartagena (Colombia). In January 1718 he nominated a judge with the rank of

visitador, Pedro José de Olavarriaga, as commissioner against the contraband trade.

Olavarriaga compiled a series of accusations against the governor of Caracas, Marcos Francisco de Betancourt, and imprisoned him. Assembling army units to interdict the trade with Tucacas, and with forty ships at his disposal to patrol the coast, he attacked Tucacas in November 1720. In his report to the king, the viceroy wrote that "The synagogue which the Jews had erected on the mainland was destroyed, together with the other houses, and the intruders retreated to the key of Paiclas."¹⁹

The viceroy's report was disputed when witnesses offered different accounts of the attack on Tucacas during the investigation of Olavarriaga, who was imprisoned in 1721 for administrative fraud and other excesses:

- Witness Juan José de Varrios: "The Dutch burned their own houses in Tucacas and left for Curaçao."
- Witness Andres Fernandes: "The Dutch residents of Tucacas set it on fire and left for Curaçao when they learned that Olavarriaga had invaded the coast and they would be unable to do business."
- Captain Juan de Olivares: "All the foreign vessels anchored in the port left, some for Barlovento, and the others, after burning Tucacas, for Curaçao."
- Witness Juan Salgado: "The Dutch in the port of Tucacas burned houses, and twelve to fourteen ships left for Curaçao."
- Witness Captain Bacilio Antonio de Cuebas: "On the coast between Coro and San Juan there were more than forty ships, which left with the arrival of Olavarriaga and burned the houses they had built in Tucacas."²⁰

Governor Betancourt was released from prison by the new governor, Diego Portales. Olavarriaga remained in prison for six months.

The synagogue and organized Jewish community of Tucacas may have been destroyed in 1720, but Jewish merchants continued to be active there. When the Dutch returned to Tucacas in 1722, Governor Portales feared that they might occupy the whole province of Venezuela.²¹

More and more ships anchored in Tucacas, a number of them as large as 300 tons. Some of the ships sailed directly to Europe and back, bypassing Curaçao entirely.

Governor Portales made a special tour of the Venezuelan coast in January 1722 to observe the situation. He reported that

Dutch ships practically block every port. Worse than that, Jews and Dutch are not only doing business on the coast, but are present at the fairs in January and July, when cacao beans are collected, sleeping in farms and valleys, and local women sleep with them. The population has to trade with them as there is a lack of textiles and other merchandise, which is not received from the [Iberian] peninsula, and it is recommended that the crown send one galleon, four ships, and fifteen to twenty smaller vessels every six months in order to supply the province.²²

In summing up the situation, the viceroy revealed how difficult it would be to put an end to the illicit commerce. The issue, he said, caused scandals and quarrels even in his office, and local officials participated in or at least tolerated the illicit trade, which “prejudiced the public administration, local administration, and the royal finances. It also caused a weakening of the local customs and religion, by the influence of heretics and Jews on the inhabitants.”²³

Based upon the evidence cited, it is quite certain that there was a Jewish congregation in Tucacas between 1693 and 1720, and a synagogue until at least 1720.

Mordecai Arbell has had a distinguished career both in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he served, among other posts, as the ambassador to Panama and Haiti, and in international business. He has also pursued scholarly studies in the history of Sephardic life in the Caribbean and will shortly be publishing a study of the subject with the University Press of New England.

Notes

I am deeply indebted to the Academia Nacional de la Historia of Venezuela, and to its director, Dr. Guillermo Moron, and his staff, for their help in locating the archival documents in Caracas and Seville which enabled me to shed some light on the Jewish presence in Tucacas.

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2. *Ibid.*, p. 359.

3. Cornelius Ch. Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean and in the Guianas, 1680–1791* (Assen, 1985), p. 239.

4. Joseph Corcos, *A Synopsis of the History of the Jews of Curaçao* (Curaçao, 1897), pp. 16–18.

5. Isaac Emmanuel and Suzanne Emmanuel, *History of the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles* (Cincinnati, 1970), p. 125.

6. Archivo General de Indias, Seville (Santo Domingo), December 9, 1714, document 715.

7. Archivo General de Indias, Testimony on the Letters Captured from different Dutch and Jews from Curaçao (Santo Domingo), document 759 of September, October, November 1720.

8. Celestino Andres Arausz Monfante, *El Contrabando Hollandes en el Caribe durante la primera mitad del siglo XVIII* (Caracas, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 65–66.

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10. Archivo General de Indias, Don Jose Francisco de Cuinas to his Majesty, August 11, 1711, no. 108.

11. Juan Jacobo Montero de Espinos to the King, April 9, 1711, Archivo General de Indias (Santo Domingo), document 697.

12. Jose de Canas to the King, Archivo General de Indias, Seville (Santo Domingo), May 28, 1712, document 751.

13. Marcos Francisco de Betancourt to the King, Caracas, August 23, 1717, Archivo General de Indias, (Santo Domingo), document 697.

14. Arausz Monfante, *El Contrabando Hollandes*, p. 199.

15. Since Jews usually used their Hebrew names in the synagogue and their Portuguese names when dealing with non-Jews, it may be that this Samuel is identical to the Samuel Hebreo mentioned previously.

16. Corcos, *Synopsis of the History*, p. 18.

17. Goslinga, *Dutch in the Caribbean*, p. 97.

18. Antonio Arellano Morego, *Relaciones geograficas de Venezuela* (Caracas, 1964), p. 430.

19. Jorge de Villalonga to the King, Cartagena de Indias, March 7, 1721, Archivo General de Indias (Santo Domingo), document 761, cited in Arausz Monfante, *El Contrabando Hollandes*, p. 194. I was told by Venezuelan historians of the region

that a special Catholic mass was celebrated on the ruins of the synagogue. (As yet, I have uncovered no document in proof of this.)

20. Archivo General de Indias (Santo Domingo), document 759, October 8, 1727, pp. 656–668.

21. Portales to the King, Caracas, October 1, 1722, Archivo General de Indias (Santo Domingo), document 699.

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23. Jorge de Villalonga to the King, Santa Fe, January 1722, Archivo General de Indias (Santa Fe), document 286.

American Jewish Personalities
Aunt Rose: A Memoir

Daniel J. Elazar

At twelve noon, Central Standard Time, Gimel b'Adar, 5735 (February 14, 1975), humanity in the United States, Minneapolis, and the Jewish people suffered an irreparable loss with the passing of Rose Barzon Goldman. "Aunt Rose," as she was known to three generations, was one of the unsung figures of our age—a woman who left her imprint upon several generations; an imprint which is felt in more than one corner of the world even now, all this with few beyond those who knew her well being the wiser.

Rose Goldman was a friend to humanity. She began her life with great love for humanity as a whole that expressed itself in a very deep socialism. She ended her life not loving humanity less but deeply disappointed with both socialism and the potentiality of humanity in the mass, and only willing to love people as individuals.

From the time she was a teenager until World War II, Aunt Rose was proudly a socialist, a Labor Zionist to be exact—but a sensible one. As a Zionist she was never one who could succumb the least bit to the blandishments of the Communists, whom she not only understood to be enemies of her people, but enemies of all people. When she died, there were still a few ex-Communists in Minneapolis who had tried to approach her on the subject of the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s, the salad days of the American left's love affair with Moscow, and who recalled the lash of her response. Yet for the last twenty years of her life she firmly declared that she was no longer a socialist, that she did not believe the human race to be capable of socialism or that socialism would be good for it.

In her last few years, disappointment piled upon disappointment for a woman who took humanity seriously and for whom world affairs went to the heart. Despite myriad family satisfactions, she could not rest as she saw the dreams of her youth debauched in an increasingly degenerate society. So her love for humanity became more than ever a simple caring for people.

It was Aunt Rose who taught me what equality really means: how you can hire a woman to come in and help with the housework without demeaning her or yourself if, as my aunt did, you recognize the fundamental equality of people and the fundamental nobility of any work well done. How different was the relationship between my aunt and those who over the years came in to help her with the housework from the relationships between matron and maid that we see in so many households and in so many parts of the world. When we all sat at the same table for lunch, we did so neither ostentatiously nor begrudgingly, but simply because that was the way that Aunt Rose understood the world.

Really Jewish and American

Aunt Rose was born in Bessarabia and was brought to the United States in 1903 after the Kishinev pogrom. People born in Bessarabia do not say they were born in Russia or Rumania, the formal possessors of sovereignty over Bessarabia for most of this century, or in Moldova, the present successor state for most of Bessarabia, but in Bessarabia, a province that was under Ottoman suzerainty (the name is from the Turkish for a string of border fortifications) until the beginning of the nineteenth century and never quite linked itself with either of its later masters.

She always claimed that she could remember the pogrom, the people hiding, the pogromchiks running in the streets, even though she was only two years old when it occurred. Indeed, it could well have left an indelible memory on the mind of a precocious child. She frequently told us what it had been like to be in Kishinev during the pogrom and proudly produced a torn megillah, a scroll of Esther, which her father, my grandfather, had picked up from the street after the pogrom had subsided. When I was a teenager she gave my mother, her sister, that megillah, and my mother and father went to a sofer, a scribe, and had it completed so that we could again use it on Purim as a sign of the indomitable continuity of the Jewish people.

Whatever her fleeting memories of Kishinev, Aunt Rose's real memories were those of the United States and, most particularly, of turn-of-the-century Minneapolis. My aunt became a great American patriot, loving the United States as few people whom I have known.

When she married Sam Goldman, she entered into a world in which love of America was a dominant motif, but she brought that love with her to the marriage.

My uncle was a veteran of both world wars, volunteering as soon as he reached the minimum age in World War I (he never got farther than Fort Snelling in his own backyard) and then securing a special act of Congress to allow him to enter the army overage at the beginning of World War II through the good offices of then Senator Joseph Ball. I remember looking over my uncle's shoulder as a boy of eight early in April 1942 to read the dispatches (ultimately untruthful) from Bataan. Two months later, he was in the army on his way to the west coast, where he was assigned to coastal defense batteries of the U.S. Coast Artillery for the duration.

My uncle had been active in veterans groups since the First World War, and my aunt became active with him, a devoutly Jewish lady who developed rare attachments to veterans and their wives of all backgrounds, from all groups throughout the State of Minnesota. My mother and father both loved America deeply, and there are many qualities of patriotism that I learned from them both, but in a fundamental sense I learned to love the United States from Aunt Rose and Uncle Sam, who not only loved the country in a general way but were involved in that large world outside the Jewish community, dealing with questions of civic life on a day-to-day basis.

For years, until I was in my twenties, I looked upon my aunt and uncle as quintessential Americans. Only later did I discover that my aunt, with all her love for the United States, felt deep in her bones that Jewish life in America had a certain tenuousness, not because of the failings of America, but because of its overpowering attractiveness. As a result, one part of her had to keep alive certain reservations about her own total commitment to the American ideal.

I recall now, as I write this memoir, how my aunt and uncle introduced me to my earliest memories of life in the United States as it was lived in Minnesota. They took us to their camp on Big Island in Lake Minnetonka, established by the State of Minnesota for its veterans after World War I and to which they faithfully repaired every summer and most weekends until the late 1950s, when her health prevented them from continuing to rough it at that relatively primitive campsite.

The last time I saw Aunt Rose outside of the hospital, in September 1974, I took her and Uncle Sam for a ride, and we went out to Lake Minnetonka. When we started out, I thought it would be just another jaunt to see the fall foliage — something we had done together so often — only to discover that her poor health and my uncle's failing ability at the wheel had kept them from enjoying the pleasures of even seeing their beloved lake for a longer time than they cared to remember. With great delight, my aunt summoned up her utmost strength to enjoy once again the bays and coves of that great natural treasure that is now on the very doorstep of Minneapolis. In driving around, we reminisced about how far away from the city the lake had seemed in earlier years and how close it now was.

When we drove up to the docks at Excelsior, Aunt Rose gazed sadly for the last time at the amusement park, then being torn down, to which she had come so often as a young girl, and then across the lake to Big Island. She delighted in the fact that on the dock we met one of her old friends, a Swedish-American veteran of the First World War, one of the last of the great Swedish migration to Minnesota, who had remained on Big Island as its caretaker and who had brought the camp boat over for supplies. With great pleasure she reintroduced me and introduced my own family to him, showing us off to a comrade with whom they had spent so many good times. As they stood there, thinking and reminiscing about old friends long gone, she gazed wistfully at the waters and with great effort managed to walk out on the dock to get a bit closer to the Big Island she could not physically manage to visit again.

This American side of my life with Aunt Rose and Uncle Sam comes back to me now in a series of flashing memories: A three-year-old boy holding a big fish while climbing out of his uncle's rowboat onto the island. A picnic one October in the 1950s with my aunt and uncle and George and Helen, two of their friends from that world on the bank of Mille Lacs, with the wind blowing and the promise of snow in the air, the little campfire and the cans of cold beer. My brother standing up in my uncle's rowboat in defiance of orders, and my uncle tumbling him into the water to teach him a lesson. Two of their Jewish veteran friends, Ben and Morris, sitting at our table on Friday night talking of Big Island and that company of veterans, and, finally, the parade of veterans from two



Sam and Rose Barzon Goldman

(courtesy of Daniel J. Elazar)

wars, marching through the grass up the hill to the dining hall on Big Island. In the summer of 1973, I was at one last affair with my aunt and uncle and their veterans, the annual picnic of his American Legion post, where in a time of Watergate, Vietnam, and student protest, men still played baseball with their boys, children still raced in potato sacks, and we could eat and drink together on the banks of a lake in the warm Minnesota sun.

My aunt and uncle were the ones who taught me that veterans organizations were not simply men play-acting to relive old days in camp and field (although they were that too), and that the American Legion was not simply a symbol of reaction (as many of my "professional liberal" teachers and friends would have it), but, rather, that these were Americans expressing themselves in their own decent ways, loving their country, and prepared to understand and love a Jewish family that brought its kosher food to their picnics. For fifty years and more, Aunt Rose ate fish rather than steak or venison at the veterans' dinners—a woman who was clearly, if unostentatiously, Jewish through and through, even when serving in one important post after another in the Legion auxiliary or that of the Disabled American Veterans. My aunt taught me by example how to live in two cultures, how to be a part of both, in a ways that no theologian or philosopher could.

Mostly Minnesotan

My aunt's American links were, first and foremost, links to Minneapolis and Minnesota. She loved her city and her state, and communicated that love to a young boy whose family moved him away from his native land at a tender age, and who came to feel that he has been in exile ever since. Within Minnesota, Minneapolis had her commanding loyalty. Once, when I was a brash young college student, I said to my aunt, "You know, Aunt Rose, it's really an accident that I was not born in Saint Paul, where my parents were living at the time." My aunt looked me squarely in the eye and said, "That was no accident." Somehow St. Paul did not quite have it for her, it was not as pretty as Minneapolis, it did not have the lakes. Worse, St. Paul was fusty (this from a woman who found it difficult to accept anything modern in the way of technology or architecture—

even Kleenex), and, perhaps most telling, its Jewish community was somehow not quite as Jewish because it was not quite as Jewishly learned in her years. This last was—naturally—a reflection upon the city as a whole. Like most Minneapolitans, my Aunt tolerated St. Paul. She knew, of course, that since it was in Minnesota, it was better than any city outside of the state, but within the family, so to speak, it definitely occupied a distant second place.

My aunt and my mother grew up on the corner of Eighth and Marshall avenues in northeastern Minneapolis, where my grandfather had a grocery store and the family had rooms in the back of the store. My mother was actually born in those rooms. Later, she and my uncle lived on the old North Side, the famed Jewish neighborhood of Minneapolis, first on Elwood near Sixth Avenue, which later became Olson Highway. (I remember when they widened it in 1940 and how they moved the big stone Sumner Branch Library back so that it would survive the widening.) During World War II, when my uncle went into the army, she moved in with the Hinitz family, good friends who lived at Fifteenth and Penn. After my uncle returned they bought a little bungalow on Newton half a block north of Plymouth Avenue. When the North Side ceased to be viable, they moved to an apartment complex just inside of Minneapolis at the border with St. Louis Park near Lake Street and Excelsior Boulevard. Neither would think of actually living outside of the Minneapolis city limits, so they found a way to stay in the city and still be part of the new Jewish community in St. Louis Park.

My aunt got immeasurable pleasure from the fact that I loved Minneapolis and Minnesota so much, and she never failed to comment on it. When I had polio in 1953, and expressed the hope that I would soon be able to see the “Golden Valley” where Basset’s Creek passes just to the west of North Minneapolis, she sent my uncle out to take a picture of the valley to send it to me. I have that picture somewhere, but more important I have the vision of that valley at the end of Plymouth Avenue as part of my aunt’s “domain.”

As good Minnesotans, active in civic life, my aunt and uncle knew all the state’s politicians and leaders from the time of my childhood and before. Mention Floyd Olson, the great New Deal governor of the state, and she would tell us stories of how he was a North Side boy, how he grew up in a Jewish neighborhood at the turn of the

century and served as the Shabbes goy for numerous Jewish families, learning Yiddish in the process. My aunt used to tell me with relish how he had embarrassed the B'nai B'rith by appearing before them to speak and addressing them in his good Yiddish to their great discomfiture, since at that time the organization was still composed mainly of old guard German Jews, their children and grandchildren, for whom Yiddish was the "jargon" of the Jews from Eastern Europe, an embarrassment.

My uncle had campaigned for and with Olson and had been a precinct committeeman for him. Mention Hubert Humphrey and my uncle would tell how he had worked alongside him from the time of his mayoralty campaign, back in 1944, following him in his career as it moved upward. When I first met Humphrey in person at a meeting of the Cook County Young Democrats in 1955 when I was at the University of Chicago, I had but to mention my Uncle Sam's name and his face lit up.

My aunt and uncle were supporters of the Farmer-Labor Party. I would be surprised if they had not been. My aunt, I know, voted for Norman Thomas at least four times. She distrusted Franklin D. Roosevelt, both as a socialist and as a Jew. How right she was in her distrust of FDR later became apparent to me, even if I could not agree with the way she manifested it.

After the events of the early 1950s, my aunt became increasingly disillusioned with all politicians. Her high moralistic standards put even the ones she had loved in compromising positions in her eyes. A moralistic Minnesotan to the end, even the slightest movement away from the straight-and-narrow path of public service was enough to bring a great hurt. In the last few years, even Hubert Humphrey was tarnished in her eyes by his pursuit of the presidency with such avidity.

The Most Authentic Jew

But with all this, first and foremost, my aunt was a Jew, an authentic Jew, perhaps the most authentic Jew I knew for the first two decades of my life. Not that she was any more Jewish than my parents, but she had the capacity of going to the heart of the matter and putting

her fingers on what was authentic and what was phoney in Jewish life, no matter what the occasion.

My aunt attributed this Jewishness of hers to the efforts of her parents, frequently contrasting their ability to communicate their Jewishness to her and to my mother with the inability of her husband's parents, who were equally if not more devout, to communicate the same feelings and commitments to their eight children. My aunt would put it this way, "Tell me, Daniel, what was the difference? How did my parents know what to do with two young girls to make them so Jewish, when Bubbie and Zadie Goldman, who were really far more observant, failed so completely in the task? How did they do it? After all, my father died when I was a little girl and your mother was even younger, and my mother died when I was nineteen and your mother thirteen. Tell me, how did they do it?"

The question was one of genuine puzzlement, though she would proceed to narrate the answer, "You know my parents, your grandparents, had to keep their grocery store open on Shabbes and Yontif. The exigencies of making a living required them to do so, but they never let us little girls work in the store on those days. Other parents would have made their children work on the grounds that the children were not yet required to observe the mitzvot [commandments] and therefore it would spare the adults a transgression. My parents felt that children had to learn not to work on Shabbes, that if they had to, it should be on their heads and not on their children. So Friday nights, we would retreat into the back room, light the candles as if Shabbes had come for all of us, and then my father would go back to tend the store. On Tisha B'Av they would fast all day, working in the store the whole time without eating, although they saw to it that we did have something to eat. In those days, my father, your grandfather, used to take his horse and wagon to make deliveries out on the prairie, where Fridley is today, but he never delivered on Shabbes, saying that he might have to work but that his horse did not."

While we always had first-night Seder at the Goldmans, Aunt Rose reserved second-night Seder for herself, a Barzon family Seder, as it were, with relevant Goldmans and Elazars attached, and such guests as she and Uncle Sam wanted, usually one or two of my uncle's Jewish veteran associates, one or two individuals or couples associ-

ated with the Minneapolis Talmud Torah who did not have family in the area. My aunt continued her Seders until Harriet and I moved to Minneapolis in 1963. Then we assumed the function for the two years we were in town, and when we moved to Philadelphia took it with us. After that, Aunt Rose and Uncle Sam used to come to our Seder, the burden having grown too much for her.

She told me so many stories. I always promised myself that I would sit her down and record them, but except for one attempt which did not go well (she was too spontaneous to respond to a formal taping), I never did, and now it is too late, and I can remember but a few of them. But she evoked for me an image of two grandparents whom I never knew but who had an instinct for making their children Jews.

The last conversation we had on the subject, on the Sunday before she died, revolved around a letter she had received from my daughter Naomi, written in Hebrew, which gave her a great, great thrill. She said to me then, "When I read your daughter's letter, I think of my parents and I thank God for what they did, for making us what we were, so that your daughter would have that feeling."

My aunt's Jewishness was authentic, both in the standards she demanded of herself and of others. She knew what was phoney in Jewish life, and she knew what could be changed for new times in the spirit of Jewish tradition. Apparently, there is a strong streak of this in our family. Her grandfather has been raised in a Hasidic family, but had broken with the Hasidim because he could not accept the authority of the rebbe and was repelled by the rebbe's *tish*, the custom of ordinary Hasidim scrambling for leftovers from his Sabbath meal. My grandfather, her father, maintained that combination of Jewish commitment and hard-headed Jewish independence, allowing himself to make hard choices regarding the kind of Jewish life he would lead and his children would be taught to lead in the New World. He did not make the mistake of trying to preserve everything he had known in the old country. So, too, he certainly did not accept the view that in the New World, things were so different that whatever he or his children felt was inconvenient and wanted to drop was OK. Rather, he laid the foundation for two young girls to be able to build an authentic American Jewish life for themselves.

My aunt spent more than fifty years exposing the phoniness of the

Jewish life she saw around her. She devoted her life to efforts at its betterment as a builder and as a critic. She learned to speak Hebrew as a girl in the Minneapolis Talmud Torah. No summer camps, no Israel trip, just a long trip from their combination home and store at Eighth and Marshall, across the Mississippi River to Freemont Avenue on the North Side where the Talmud Torah was located. Summer and winter, five days a week for years, plus services on Shabbat, where she acquired a solid working knowledge of the language, as did my mother.

In later years, my aunt became a major symbol of the Talmud Torah and widely known as its staunchest champion. She was a member of the institution's first or second class, although, for reasons that had to do with the death of her father, she did not graduate. On the fiftieth anniversary of the graduation of her class, they formally graduated her, this after she had spent the intervening years as a linchpin of the Talmud Torah alumni and ladies auxiliary, and over twenty-five years as Talmud Torah librarian. She was a living, walking encyclopedia of the history of the Talmud Torah. There was material in her head that only she knew, which, since I did not record it, is now lost to posterity. Many times she told me of how Mar (Mr.) Even (Elijah Even, the first principal) established a pattern of disciplined dignity in the school, and about how Dr. (George J.) Gordon built it into the greatest afternoon Hebrew school in the United States.

Her own life exemplified the great influence of the Talmud Torah on Minneapolis Jewry. She was a founder of the Talmud Torah alumni. Daas, the study group which her alumni group founded, met regularly every month for over half a century. As part of the TT alumni, she participated in the founding of Beth El, Minneapolis' leading Conservative congregation, in 1924, which grew out of the alumni services.

Over the years, she and Rabbi David Aronson (who was brought from Duluth to be the congregation's first rabbi) developed a truly loving relationship. Our two families became very close to one another, but that did not preclude her from being willing to challenge "Rabbi's" actions when she deemed it necessary to do so. Quite to the contrary, she felt it incumbent upon her as a Jew and a friend to do just that. When Rabbi Aronson retired forty years later and left the

community, there was a reception tendered in his honor. When my aunt came up to him, he said to her very quietly, "Thank you, Rose, for being my conscience all these years."

Aunt Rose was the conscience for many Jews of all ages. Ask Rabbi Mordecai Lifeman, who once told me that, when he came to Minneapolis during the years he was a seminary student, he went first to "Rosie" for her to knock the seminary-acquired rabbinical pomposity out of him. Ask Gerald Bubis, the founding head of the HUC-JIR School of Jewish Communal Studies in Los Angeles. Ask Arthur Oleisky, the Conservative rabbi of Tucson. Ask a hundred other Jews who held or still hold key positions in Jewish communal life who grew up under her influence. And ask the several dozens, if not hundreds, of young girls whom she taught in Sunday School for many years.

My aunt was a great teacher, although she did not deem herself worthy to teach in the Talmud Torah itself. She would say, "I know enough to teach Sunday School, but I would not dare follow in the footsteps of my great teachers." Instead, she became the Talmud Torah's librarian and held that position for over twenty-five years. In that capacity she taught generation after generation of children who came into the library not only how to find books but how to find wisdom. Generations of students found her the best part of the TT, with her penetrating ideas and her ability to get to the heart of the matter and tell the truth. For them, she became a legend in her time. One can go to any part of the world and mention Rose Goldman, and if there are former students of the Minneapolis Talmud Torah present, their eyes will light up.

My aunt was not what you might call a progressive librarian. She loved books and communicated that love. She was careful and methodical, she tried to keep up with the literature and did. She was a learned librarian and not a technician. But she saw her principal role not in revamping the system by adding fancy mechanisms but in teaching and counseling class after class of children who came into her domain.

My aunt's Jewishness was eminently practical. She had an instinct as to where and how to innovate, and when to leave well enough alone. She introduced Hanukkah decorations into the American Jewish community on the grounds that Jewish holidays should be made

pretty. She always said she had done this, and when I got older and was able to check around, it seems that she really did. Others saw it as an imitation of the goyim, but in doing so, misread the whole point.

My aunt could never tolerate foolish imitations of anybody, reserving her sharpest thrusts for rabbis who put on ministerial airs. There was a standing argument between her and Uncle Sam that lasted throughout their fifty years of marriage (less one month) as to whether the Jewish War Veterans should fire rifle volleys at the funerals of their departed comrades. My uncle, a veteran through and through, wanted that rite and supported it against all comers; my aunt, on the other hand, despite her support for veterans' organizations, saw this as "goyish militarism."

She supported Rabbi Aronson, but let even "Rabbi" overstep his bounds—let him criticize the Talmud Torah, or seek to subvert it (which she always felt that he wished to do), and she was on him like a flash. And he not only respected her for it but perhaps even feared her a little bit, because she spoke the truth.

Her Zionism and Israel

More than anything else, my aunt's Jewishness was manifested in her Zionism. She was a Zionist from childhood and, indeed, almost moved to Israel (then Palestine) after World War I after her parents had died. Her Uncle David, a *halutz* (pioneer) then briefly in the United States, was about to take his two young nieces back with him when it was discovered that my aunt had been inadvertently left off her father's citizenship papers and hence was not an American citizen. With the unsettled status of Palestine at the time, her uncle would not risk her future, so went on alone. While she soon remedied the matter, the opportunity for aliyah passed, never to return.

She and Uncle Sam went to Israel as often as they could—four times, all told, saving her librarian's salary for the trip. Once she was so sick that she had to travel first class on the plane in order to be able to make the trip at all, this despite their truly modest means. The last trip that she made, early in 1974, undoubtedly shortened her life. We still ask ourselves how her doctor could have permitted her to go, but I know that, had she been given the choice between a few more years with no more visits to Israel and a shorter time

with that last trip, she would have chosen the trip without hesitation. She manfully keep up with the group throughout the trip, but it wore her down, and just before leaving, she suffered the heart attack that would ultimately kill her, although neither she nor we knew it at the time.

The trip back to the States must have been sheer agony for her. When she arrived in Minneapolis she was hospitalized immediately, and for nearly a year she was in and out of hospitals, with her heart consistently deteriorating. Still, the very last words she said to me when I left her on the Tuesday before she died, when she thought that she would not see me before I returned to my family in Jerusalem (and may even have felt in her bones that she would never see me again) were, "Tell them in Israel that somehow we will be back, that they should wait for us and expect us, because we will be back again."

Prominently displayed on the wall of her home was an old piece of Bezalel art work, perhaps one of the first pieces of work to come out of that Zionist effort to revive Jewish art in the Jewish homeland, an inlay of what seemed to be mother of pearl on wood with the motto, *HaAsita HaYom Ba'ad Amcha v' Artzecha?* ("Have you done today for your people and your land?"). There is not a day that passes that I do not see that plaque before me and ask myself that question. Aunt Rose told me that on one of her trips she went to Bezalel and described the plaque to them. They told her that it was indeed a very rare piece and they had none like it. She immediately promised it to them in her will and brought it back to them on her next trip.

My aunt's Zionism lasted through thick and thin. In the 1920s and 1930s and through the 1940s she was a staunch Labor Zionist, an active member of Pioneer Women, and a friend of the "greats" of the Labor Zionist movement—those who later became the leaders of Israel. She used to tell how she took the late Levi Eshkol, Israel's third Prime Minister, to see the movie *Cinderella* when he was once in the Twin Cities in those pre-state years and had a free afternoon. She and Golda Meir were friends from the old days, and until Golda became Prime Minister and my aunt no longer wished to intrude upon her, they invariably saw each other whenever my aunt and uncle were in Israel. Eliezer Kaplan, David Ben-Gurion, Moshe Sharett, all of them had passed through my aunt's portals. More-

over, through her close ties to men like Dr. George J. Gordon and A. N. Bearman she met the other greats of the Zionist movement, and could tell personal stories of Chaim Weizmann and Vladimir Jabotinsky, Nahum Sokolow and Shamaryahu Levin—the whole galaxy of the founders of the Jewish state.

In the 1950s, when she ceased being a socialist, she also lost interest in Pioneer Women. She never really was active in Zionist circles after that. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Israel itself became something of a disappointment to her as she began to perceive its harsher realities. That hurt her more than even she could express and may have also helped shorten her life, but she never wavered in her basic faith or commitment. She would gladly have moved to Israel had Uncle Sam been in a position to adapt to a new life there.

A Last Word

My aunt and uncle had no children of their own. They were foster parents to Joe and Ruth Sugerman, a brother and sister whom they took into their home in the years immediately prior to World War II, raising them through their teens. But, when the war came, they both went away, one to serve in the armed forces, and the other to do war work on the West Coast, and neither returned. As it was, only a great act of charity had led Aunt Rose and Uncle Sam to take in those particular children in the first place. There was little in common between them and they drifted apart, one of the many disappointments in my aunt's life.

As a result, my brother and I became the children she never had. We were far closer than is normally the case between aunt and nephews. Our children, in turn, became her grandchildren for all intents and purposes. If she took some pride in our achievements, it was little enough that we could bring to her for all she brought to us.

We buried Aunt Rose on a gray Sunday in February. The temperature was 32 degrees, and everyone was pleased that at last a thaw had come to the Twin Cities after a hard month of winter. The funeral cortege drove from the new Beth El (which earned both her disapproval as a building and her pleasure for the facility it gave her in overcoming her deafness to enable her to participate in the services) down France Avenue, past the home of her niece Joan, where we

were to sit shiva, to her apartment at the very edge of Minneapolis (she and Uncle Sam were such Minneapolitans that even when they had to move from her beloved North Side, they found a place legally within the city limits, although, for all intents and purposes, it was part of suburban St. Louis Park), then east on 30th Street to Lake Calhoun, south along the lake routes which we had traversed so many times to enjoy the beauties of Minneapolis, to her great pleasure, and then down to the cemetery where her parents were buried. It was a gray day, and the cemetery, sitting on flat land in the heart of Richfield, looked like a scene on the open prairie, out of a nineteenth-century novel. My aunt was returning to that prairie, amidst the Jews who had built a great community—a mother city in Israel—on that prairie during the course of her lifetime.

People said that Rabbi Abelson's eulogy of her was the best eulogy he had ever delivered. That was because he, too, loved her. Yet had she been standing with us, she would have given the funeral no more than a mixed review. She would have been gratified to see the people who came, representing a cross-section of her life, friends spanning three or four generations, but the service would have provoked her usual response to innovations and gimmicks which she so deplored. My mother and I deplored them for her. In her memory, we could do no less. But then, as Rabbi Abelson said, "She was the last angry woman."

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Hail to the Chiefs!

Harriet S. Lazarus

When my grandmother, Hedwig Kramer Stricker, was brought over from Neuleiningen, Germany, to Cincinnati in 1844 at the age of four, I do not suppose she thought very much about America's government or Presidents. Seventeen years later, in 1861, she was standing in a large crowd on Third and Vine streets in front of the Burnet House, Cincinnati's best hotel, listening to Abraham Lincoln speak. He had just been elected President of the United States, and was on his way to Washington, D.C., to his inauguration. I have read that there were threats against his life, and that he had to be smuggled into Washington from Baltimore at night, even in disguise. But apparently in Cincinnati he was able to speak openly to large crowds, as he did from an upstairs balcony of the hotel. There was an old print made of this occasion, which my mother had hanging in her home. But it is gone and will have to be searched out again in antiquarian shops, at historical societies, and at antique shows.

Demonstrating her profound patriotism during the Civil War, my grandmother is listed, in 1863, with many other ardent citizens, as working for the Great Western Sanitary Fair.¹ Its purpose was to raise money for wounded soldiers of the Union Army and their families. Sanitary Fairs were held in many cities, and were forerunners of the Red Cross. They were functions of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, an agency of the federal government. But they were financed by the private sector.

My grandmother worked at a booth of the Phoenix Society,² listed under "German Organizations." The booths at the Fair were run by people from all segments of Cincinnati society, for "every church or congregation, every benevolent association, ladies aid society, and all other humane organizations, of whatever name,"³ were invited to participate in this massive effort of support for the Union soldiers and their families.

The Phoenix Society actually was a Jewish social club. There were

several Jewish groups represented, as well as every other denomination. The Phoenix Club building of a later date still exists today, as a fine restaurant on Ninth and Race streets. Many names listed as working at the various booths or on committees are very familiar to a Cincinnati. Their descendants in many cases are still around and reverberating — making waves.

One group should be noted, listed under the heading "Colored People's Circular." A moving statement of a desire to be part of this civic activity states, "we propose to give a concert and supper ... the proceeds to be given to the Great Western Sanitary Fair.... We invoke the earnest cooperation of all; for the cause in which we labor is the cause of liberty, of humanity, of God." The name of William H. Parham stands out, a name still associated with African-American publications today in Cincinnati⁴

I mention this Fair and my grandmother's involvement in it to show how quickly immigrants became proud Americans, and how eager they were to work for their new young country. So eager were they to demonstrate their American patriotism, that they passed along very few stories about life in the old country (Germany and others). They did not look back, but forward to their lives here, and their fond hopes for the freedom and opportunity that were their reasons for emigrating. It has been for us, their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, to rediscover the places of their origin and their lives over there. Without Hitler and other twentieth-century scourges, we might not have had the incentive to dig out our pasts, before America.

The next person in our family, to my knowledge, to have direct contact with a U.S. President was my mother, still Madeline Rollman at the time. My brother, Sidney G. Stricker, Jr., had a letter written to President William Howard Taft from his brother, Charles P. Taft, as follows:

Charles P. Taft
A. S. Taft
Times Star Building
Cincinnati, Ohio

June 10, 1912

Personal

The President
White House
Washington, D.C.

My Dear Will:

Mr. Henry Rollman, his daughter and Mr. August Nuernberger, are visiting Washington and wish to pay their respects to the President. They belong to the firm of Rollman and Sons Company and occupy our building on the northwest corner of Fifth and Vine Streets, and for almost forty years they have never failed to pay their rent on time. They have a fine mercantile record and I am sure you will like to meet them.

Your affectionate brother,
Charles P. Taft

Apparently in this earlier day, private citizens could have personal meetings in the White House with their Presidents. In any case, my mother did go to the White House with her father to meet President Taft. She received a fine photograph of him inscribed thus: "To Miss Madeline Rollman, a Cincinnati girl with my best wishes, William Howard Taft." The date is June 13, 1912.⁵

My husband, Simon Lazarus, Jr., had his own first moment of glory visiting the White House when he was a young boy, eleven years old. The President was to have been Warren G. Harding. He was a native of Marion, Ohio, as was my husband's aunt, Meta Marx Lazarus. They had been neighbors and friends in their early years. Through this connection and probably business or political connections in Columbus, Ohio, my husband and several of his young Fred Lazarus cousins were invited to meet President Harding in the White House. But before the meeting could take place, President Harding died. However, President Coolidge did receive them. He invited them to a children's party at the White House (1923 or 1924). For entertainment there was a magician, who caused a tree to grow oranges. The magician tossed oranges out into the audience. According to Fred and Maurice (Mogie) Lazarus, the children

promptly lobbed the oranges back—a story easy to believe. I have heard other tales of life among the Lazarus young, and their early acts of terrorism.

While my father, Sidney G. Stricker, admired President Woodrow Wilson tremendously and worked for him politically, I do not believe he ever met him. But when Speaker of the House Nicholas Longworth died in 1931, President Hoover attended the funeral in Cincinnati. My father was determined that his children should see their President. He took us to Winton Place,⁶ where the President's private railroad car was waiting—close to Spring Grove Cemetery. As the train went past and President Hoover stood on the observation platform at the rear of the train, I snapped a picture of him with my beloved Kodak Speed-Graphic camera, inherited from my grandfather. Someday I shall find that picture, inevitably misplaced during these sometimes frenzied years. It may turn up yet, among my souvenirs.

My own memories of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, whom I never actually met, start with listening to his first inaugural address over the radio, March 4, 1933. I was sick in bed, staying at my cousin's house. The day was miserable—raw, sleety, end-of-winter Cincinnati dirty weather. I was fourteen years old, listening intently to a new and exciting President. I remember well his ringing words: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." This buoyant, confident leader with the spellbinding voice and smile and the upbeat message sent thrills through a very young girl, as he did through an entire paralyzed nation. Even though I was not totally aware of the Great Depression, yet I sensed the anxieties of the times. And I knew right away that this President was going to make a difference. He was indeed "The Happy Warrior."

A few years later—January, 1937—we were in Washington, D.C., escaping from the horrors of the all-time great Ohio River flood. We were staying at the Hotel Mayflower, where one of the President's Birthday Balls was held. These balls were fund-raisers for polio, the disease that had severely crippled the President. We attended the ball at the hotel, which President Roosevelt did not but Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt did. It was my first time in her presence. My undying admiration for her was ignited, reinforced by some deep

follow-up experiences down the road. I have never ceased to regard her as the outstanding woman of my lifetime.

The next time I saw Eleanor Roosevelt was at Emery Auditorium in Cincinnati—November, 1938—where she was to give the first lecture of the Wise Temple Forum. According to a lead article in the *Cincinnati Enquirer*,⁷ among the welcoming committee at Union Terminal where she came in were Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey L. Lazarus. Also dropping in to pay his respects was an old personal friend, Judge Robert S. Marx. She paid a call on her anti-New Deal cousin, Alice Roosevelt Longworth. The visit was in the nature of an olive branch—both ways.

Mrs. Roosevelt was to be introduced by Mayor James Garfield Stewart.⁸ He arrived very late. Mayor Stewart was known to imbibe spirits, and this was one of his more spirited nights. His introduction rambled all over at embarrassing length. He referred tastelessly to this distinguished First Lady as “Eleanor.” Mrs. R. retained her dignity and her cool. But I remember my sense of outrage at the disrespect and rude conduct of our mayor to a woman I revered. It was politics at its worst.

Surely one of the most pragmatic examples of presidential contact in our family belongs to Fred Lazarus, Jr. It was he who in 1939 persuaded President Roosevelt to move back the day of Thanksgiving from the last Thursday in November (November 30 that year) to the fourth Thursday, which was November 23. Thus the number of shopping days before Christmas was increased by a week, and the football schedule of Ohio State University was all fouled up. When his brother, Simon Lazarus, Sr., asked in a rage: “What damn fool did that?” Mr. Fred blandly replied: “You’re looking at him!”⁹ It was hard to determine what was more important—Christmas sales or Ohio State football.

My brother, George Stricker, was a soldier at Fort Riley, Kansas, in the Cavalry Replacement Training Center, early in World War II (1942–43). He was privileged to see his Commander-in-Chief come to review the troops. It was Easter Sunday, an early spring day. The President’s visit was a complete surprise to all but the commanding officers. It meant a great deal to the men—in training for the rugged times that lay ahead for them. Their President cared.

After a church service attended by President Roosevelt, the top

brass, and two men from each unit, the Chief rode in an open car all around the huge camp. The entire army personnel stood at attention, thousands of men saluting as he rode by, smiling and touching his familiar slouch hat to them, wrapped in his navy-blue cape. Every soldier, mesmerized, said: "He looked right at me!" It was a sight never to be forgotten. As my brother tells it: "When you are a soldier, rank is everything. And this was the Commander-in-Chief!"

A poignant footnote to this story: My brother was overseas in Germany when President Roosevelt died. When the sad news broke, every soldier, as if by signal, dropped his weapon to the ground. It was a spontaneous act of deep grief for their Leader.¹⁰ During the war years, we lived in Washington, D.C. One steamy summer night, we were taking a little ride up Connecticut Avenue to cool off. A large black limousine pulled up next to us with diplomatic license plates, "Number One." Inside sat Mrs. Roosevelt all alone except for the chauffeur—no escort, no security. Just a rather lonely figure, out also to cool off, and perhaps get away from some White House chaos. At least that was the way I sized it up, knowing nothing but the surface.

My next personal encounter with Mrs. Roosevelt, and far and away the closest one, involves more of a story. It was during the 1950s. She was at that time our United Nations ambassador and chairman of the highly sensitive Commission on Human Rights. She was a figure of great world esteem on her own. My brother Sidney was working for Schenley Industries in New York. One of his associates was Buzzy Roosevelt, born Curtis Dahl, son of Anna Roosevelt and grandson of the Franklin D. Roosevelts. Sidney brought Buzzy out to Cincinnati on business. He stayed with us on two occasions. He liked good steaks. So once we grilled on our backyard terrace, and once we took him to a well-known steak restaurant in Reading, Ohio, called Wheelman's Rest. He was a delightful and appreciative guest. After his second visit, he said he would like to do something for us in return for our hospitality. Not hesitating a minute, I said, "Well, I would like to meet your grandmother." Buzzy said that could be easily arranged.

On our next visit to New York, Sidney and Buzzy set up an invitation for us for tea with "Grand-mère"—Mrs. R. We were to meet her in her apartment in the Park Sheraton Hotel at 5:00 p.m. on a

Tuesday. Both Si and I dressed with meticulous care—understated but elegant. We arrived with Sid and Buzzy promptly at 5:00. Mrs. Roosevelt rose to greet us. I was awed by her height, as well as by her great presence. But her smile was gracious and warm.

Her attire was very informal—a loose gray dolman-sleeved sweater with boat neck, and a gray flannel skirt, quite rumpled. I especially noticed her hands, large and bony with an assortment of rings. She dispatched her secretary, “Tommy” Thompson, to have the tea cart brought in. Then she proceeded to continue an interview she was holding with some television representatives about a proposed talk show she wished to host. I learned afterward that the talk show never came off; Mrs. Roosevelt was too controversial a figure for TV in the reactionary Joseph McCarthy climate of the early 1950s.

We sat and listened, had our tea and sandwiches, and took our leave. It was one of my most indelible hours.

In 1945, the Truman family lived on Connecticut Avenue in Washington, in a large apartment building across from where we lived, on Chesapeake Street. At that time, there was no official residence for the Vice President. The day after President Roosevelt’s funeral, my sister Madeline and I stood at the entrance to our street and watched Bess Truman, daughter Margaret, and Mrs. Truman’s mother (Mrs. Wallace) enter the White House limousines, as they departed their modest apartment to become the First Family and begin a vital new era in American history. I believe that President Truman was there as well, although I cannot say for sure. It was a lesson in the unpretentiousness of this great man and his family, and the smooth transition of government power in a time of great national crisis.

The Eisenhower years found our part of the family somewhat sidelined, backbenchers. It was Uncle Fred Lazarus and his son Ralph who went to the White House at this time. But I do remember being in New York once when President Eisenhower was speaking at a dinner, and seeing his motorcade move swiftly down the street where we were staying in the East 50s, the President leaning out of his limousine and waving to the crowds, we waving from our hotel windows above the crowds. He too looked radiant and larger than life.

There was one White House visit that I did not recall until recently. It was my husband’s part as a member of the executive committee

of the American Retail Federation in 1958 to meet with President Eisenhower. The entire delegation was photographed in the Oval Office with the President. Their message to him was one of optimism about the outlook for business in the coming year. It was an honor to be part of this group, many of whom remained Si's friends when he left retailing and returned to the private practice of law. The photograph remains an example of the nonpartisan participation in government that is possible in our free society.

Now an attractive and dynamic young man appeared on the presidential scene, with a wife of star quality equal to his own. He had brains as well as looks, and was as charismatic a figure as ever appeared in American political life. He brought a breath of fresh air to our political rallies and dinners. He had wit and humor along with his good looks. He came from an Irish Catholic background — a little at variance with the stereotypical WASP candidates of the past. He was an Ivy League intellectual but no stuffed shirt — not stodgy, not "safe." He was a wealthy man who had compassion for the underdog, carrying on the traditions of the Democratic Party of Roosevelt's New Deal. To many of the Old Guard or those of a more conservative bent, John F. Kennedy with his "Best and Brightest" and his "Irish Mafia" seemed threatening. To many he gave hope for a better world ahead.

Needless to say, my husband and I were flaming Kennedyites. We supported him wholeheartedly, and were lucky enough to be invited to his inauguration.

The day before the inauguration came on like Whittier's "Snow-bound" — heavy blizzards in Cincinnati and especially in Washington. The friends who were to be our hosts called to tell us that all airports were closed. Even President Hoover, flying up from Florida, could not land. He was forced to return to Florida. If we could not get on a train, they advised us to forget about coming to Washington.

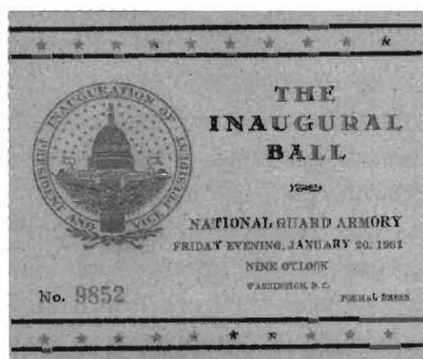
We did get on a train, probably by the skin of our teeth, carrying our suitcases, my ball gown packed separately in its own securely fastened Vogues and Vanities fancy dress box. That train ride was wild and hilarious, noisy and joyful. There were several high school or college bands aboard, scheduled to march in the inaugural parade. The music and hijinks went on all night, and did not bother us one bit. A splendid time was had by all.

The snow was so deep when we approached the Washington



Harriet and Simon Lazarus, Jr.

(courtesy of Harriet S. Lazarus)



Ticket to the John F. Kennedy Inaugural Ball

(courtesy of Harriet S. Lazarus)

area that the train stopped far out in suburban Silver Spring. We jumped out into snow up to our knees—and into the arms of our good friends who managed to meet us. There was no snow falling now, but the temperature was in the low teens, and the ice underfoot was thick and treacherous. It remained that way throughout the entire inaugural festivities, where much walking had to occur, and where one struggled to keep from freezing.

But attend we did, driven as close as possible to the inaugural grandstand by soldiers from Fort Belvoir, Virginia, hired by our hosts, Joseph L. Rauh and Robert Schulman. We were in limousines along with our hosts, plus the great playwright Arthur Miller and a prominent newspaper journalist and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Lindley. We attended a breakfast at the Old Senate Office Building given by Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois—warm for a moment—and then walked over the ice and snow for several blocks to a place where we could stand and watch Kennedy take the oath of office. Listening to the new young President say: “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country,” was a moment never to be surpassed in beautiful oratory. We agonized when Robert Frost could not see to read his poem because of the ice glare. We thrilled when our own rabbi, Dr. Nelson Glueck, delivered the benediction.

We thrilled when we finally found our heated cars and were driven home. We watched the inaugural parade on television, from the warmth of our comfortable digs in North West Washington.

That night again we braved the frigid air and ice when our cars had to let us out ten blocks from the ball in the National Guard armory. We mingled with thousands of Democrats clad in their gorgeous best, all happy to be there and staring in fascination as the entire Kennedy clan and Vice President and Mrs. Johnson appeared on a balcony—as glamorous a group as I ever expect to see. We were fortunate. I believe there were at least seven other balls, but Jacqueline Kennedy and others attended only this one. She was still recovering from the recent birth of John F. Kennedy, Jr.

One of my more beguiling memories is of strolling around the armory with Arthur Miller, having many folks come up and ask in disbelief, “Are *you* Arthur Miller?” He was always good-natured and excellent company utterly without pretense.

Camelot lasted too short a time, and the family torch passed

eventually to our son, Simon Lazarus III. I do not believe any of us ever met President Lyndon B. Johnson, although we were very close to Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas, who has been his personal attorney. We had and still have several friendly personal letters from President Johnson.

Irma and Fred Lazarus III visited the Johnson White House when they attended a Symposium of the Arts hosted by Ladybird Johnson. There were to be 400 people dining on the lawn that evening. Rain was a serious threat. But with Irma's famous luck with party weather, the sky cleared. Irma received official thanks for talking to God or whatever she did to save the day. In a book where this evening was described, Irma was mentioned with special gratitude by the chairman of the dinner.¹¹

We did meet Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey. We were his escorts one night when he came to Cincinnati to speak at a meeting. We picked him up at Lunken Airport and drove him into town, where we had dinner at the Maisonette restaurant. He was delightful company — easy to talk to, and without a trace of self-importance. He had a small entourage, for reasons of security. His people drove cars behind us and in front of us. Only one of them had dinner with us — Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson of the state of Washington.

The Nixon and Ford years involved us not at all. That statement is not entirely accurate. In 1966, two years before Richard Nixon became President, his daughter Julie and our daughter Helen became members of the class of 1970 at Smith College. Like many other parents, we took our daughter to Northampton, Massachusetts, to help her settle in, and to attend the president's reception for incoming freshmen.

As we shopped in downtown Northampton for rugs, bedspreads, and other dormitory musts, who should enter the store but Mrs. Patricia Nixon and Julie? We were the only customers in the store at that moment. We all exchanged friendly smiles, just a little reserved. I felt that Pat was an attractive lady, not "plastic" at all, with beautiful brown eyes, and Julie was a charming young woman.

They were enjoying a great American autumn ritual — helping a child furnish her first college room. And being just ordinary people for a rare, cherished moment. We respected their privacy, and remember the incident with good feelings.

The year was now 1976. Simon Lazarus III had joined the Jimmy Carter presidential campaign team, writing speeches for Carter in Atlanta. Carter won the election, and son Simon became part of the Domestic Policies staff, working in the White House with his friend Stuart Eizenstat and others (Harley Frankel, married to Wendy Lazarus). He was able to take his mother to lunch in the White House mess on several occasions. There I saw many members of the Carter team. I especially remember National Security Council Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski in his tennis whites, and others equally illustrious, lunching informally together. One day I had a look into the Oval Office when President Carter was absent.

When Presidents Reagan and Bush were in the Catbird Seat, we were part of what our son Si and his friends termed "The Government in Exile." But all members of our family were not banished. The Justin A. Rollman family, my mother's brother, were staunch Republicans, and therefore on friendly terms with both of these Presidents. My aunt Josephine Rollman was known to pick up the phone and call President Reagan's office — and get an immediate response. Once, talking to Mr. Reagan's secretary about a trip to a country where there was much inner turmoil, she was told to speak to the President directly. Her astonishing answer was: "I'm too busy. Please speak to him for me yourself!"¹²

With President Clinton I'm still finding my way. But I do like Hillary Rodham Clinton, as I did Barbara Bush. I would not mind some kind of White House connection that way again.

So this is our presidential story, as close as I can gauge it. Perhaps some of our grandchildren will carry the torch even further — hailing our Chiefs in the future. Or even becoming Chiefs themselves.

Recently, when President and Mrs. Clinton were guests at the American embassy in London, my son-in-law Ronald Freeman was asked to attend a reception in their honor. In the absence of his wife, Helen, who was in Amsterdam with me, her mother, Ron took their daughter Nell to meet the Clintons. Nell had a chance to discuss Space Camp with Mrs. Clinton, the First Lady. Both Chelsea and Nell were back in Huntsville, Alabama, at Space Camp in the summer of 1996. If Nell Freeman, my granddaughter, and Chelsea Clinton both continue to go to Space Camp for a third year, and finally meet one

another, who knows where it could lead? As Bobby Kennedy said (quoting George Bernard Shaw),

Some men see things as they are and
say why.
I dream things that never were and
say *why not?*

Harriet S. Lazarus is a descendant of Jewish immigrants who came to America in the 1830s and 1840s. She has been involved with numerous Cincinnati institutions including the Public Library of Cincinnati and the Cincinnati Art Museum. She is also a long-time member of the American Jewish Committee.

Notes

1. *History of the Great Western Sanitary Fair* (Cincinnati: C. F. Vent, 1864), pp. 114-124.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 119. Entire book.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
4. *Cincinnati Herald*. CEO Marjorie Parham.
5. Courtesy of Mr. Sidney G. Stricker, Jr.
6. A suburban train station.
7. November 15, 1938. Courtesy of Cincinnati Historical Society.
8. Father of later Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart.
9. Biographical Memorial Essay to Fred Lazarus, Jr., p. 40.
10. Interview with George Stricker.
11. Interview with Fred Lazarus III.
12. Interview with Joan R. Musekamp and Katherine Hilker.

Book Reviews

Dinnerstein, Leonard
Anti-Semitism in America

New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. xv, 369 pp.

Jaher, Frederick Cople
*A Scapegoat in the New Wilderness:
The Origins and Rise of Anti-Semitism in America.*

Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994. vii, 339 pp.

For understandable reasons, many historians who focus on the history of anti-Semitism concentrate on its manifestations in Germany and Russia. It has been here and in nations such as Hungary and Poland in East-Central Europe, and in France in Western Europe, that hostility toward Jews has been particularly evident. However, a strong case can be mounted for examining hostility in countries where anti-Semitism has been manifested on a less pronounced scale. Hence a welcome in principle should be extended to Len Dinnerstein's book on anti-Semitism in the United States and also to Frederick Jaher's monograph which focuses much of its attention on the United States but simultaneously incorporates comparative detail from the history of hostility toward Jews in other parts of the world. This latter dimension in Jaher's book is seized upon here to develop a discussion on the comparative aspects of anti-Semitism, that trains its sights particularly upon Britain and the United States.

One can begin by noticing the recognition in both Dinnerstein and Jaher that the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are of crucial importance in the history of anti-Semitism. This claim can be defended without trying to force all such hostility into the framework of the Holocaust. To engage in such activity, and there are traces of it in Jaher, is to lapse into the "presentism" which Michael Banton has criticized in the work of some practitioners in the field of race relations.

There is, in any case, abundant evidence of anti-Semitism in both the United States and Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During these years Jews had to contend with oral

abuse. Dinnerstein is particularly useful on the doggerel which centred upon the image of Jews as problems. Indeed, both he and Jaher draw attention to the theme of pork on a stick, and the same offensive jingle, with minor modification, went the rounds in Britain. And whereas the term "kike" was hardly heard in Britain, it was not unusual to hear references to "Jew boy." Moreover, the verb "to jew" entered into common currency and earned its place in dictionaries of the English language.

Simultaneously, Jews in both countries had to face specific written forms of hostility. If the United States gave birth to the rabid writings of Telemachus Thomas Timayenis, "America's most dedicated nineteenth-century anti-semite," Britain could find a parallel in the vicious outpourings of Joseph Banister, whose anti-Semitic career seems to have begun in 1901 with the publication of *England Under the Jews* and continued into the Hitlerite years. A reading of Banister's crazed outlook on the world, the image is used advisedly, encourages one to believe that it was utterly personal and related in some complex and unknown way to his personality. But there is a sense in which none of us is entirely alone, and the 1907 edition of Banister's book in the London School of Economics carries an end-comment by a C. W. Smith of Bournemouth which affirms that every word in the book was true and the Jews would yet be the ruin of "old England."

The likes of Timayenis and Banister were less effective, arguably, in spreading anti-Semitic antipathy than the more respectable anti-Semites who could be found in both countries. Goldwin Smith's detestation of Disraeli was hard to control, and, unlike Banister, he had an influential position from which to mount his offensive. He served as Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford between 1858 and 1866 and later became the first professor of constitutional history at Cornell. Frank Hugh O'Donnell, a one-time Irish National M.P., and journalist, whose hostility toward Jews would repay further attention, serves as another reminder of "respectable" anti-Semitism before 1914. Anyone who lingers on O'Donnell's hatred of Jews will soon recognize that in his case we are introduced to the paranoid world of Jew power and Jewish conspiracy even before the *Protocols* had appeared in Britain.

In both Britain and the U.S. Jews also had to face the charge that

they were deficient in patriotism. Was it G. K. Chesterton who claimed that if the British Isles had sunk into the sea Disraeli would have swum to the United States and become President? Furthermore, the observations of John Pedder, senior civil servant in the Home Office, underline that after the First World War anti-Semitism circulated in respectable and responsible sections of British society: indeed, when William Joynson Hicks was Home Secretary, Pedder had found a political soulmate whom he could advise. Pedder was a strong opponent of the naturalization of Jews, for example, because he believed that their racial qualities as Orientals would not allow them to become British and, even less, convert them into English people.

This anti-Semitism in respectable quarters of British society found its parallel in the United States in the writings of patricians such as Madison Grant, reflected in *The Passing of the Great Race*, with its assertion of the importance of race over environment and its emphasis on the racial determination of cultural patterns. As with Robert Knox, the notorious Edinburgh physician of an earlier date, who distilled his views in 1850 in *The Races of Man*, race was for Grant of supreme historical significance. Another patrician figure, Henry Cabot Lodge, also peopled this gallery of anti-Semites from patrician backgrounds. And let us not forget the activities of Henry Ford, not a patrician but a well-known figure in America, who contributed to the unfolding of anti-Semitism through the *Dearborn Independent* and his support for *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Additional similarities can also be noticed. In both countries opposition toward Jews often focused on a perceived Jewish materialism. The theme of Jews as rapacious rather than productive capitalists also took hold. They were widely stereotyped as producing nothing and living off the labor of others. Furthermore, in both countries the image of the Rothschilds in such discussions is a topic which still awaits a comprehensive coverage. Similarly, in both Britain and the United States there was a reluctance in government to admit refugees from Nazi Germany, a state of affairs which reflected underlying anti-Semitic trends in both countries and also the fear of an extension of such hostility in the wake of any such immigration. As Dinnerstein gloomily recognizes: "Prejudice against Jews and other minorities used to be taken as a matter of course until after the end of World War II." In short, it would be myopic to concentrate

on a few societies where the expression of anti-Semitism reached massive, convulsive proportions, and simultaneously to allow its other expressions to slip out of history.

Yet in treating of what became a widespread phenomenon in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, both Dinnerstein and Jaher allow a degree of simplification to creep into their discussions. Dinnerstein provides a sound working definition of the hostility we are considering when he refers to it as:

hostile expressions toward, or negative behavior against, individuals or groups because of their Jewish faith or heritage.... Sometimes antisemitism (whether as prejudiced thought or discriminatory action) has been blatant and unadulterated; on other occasions it has been part of a broader nativist wave that targets many outgroups.

This working definition is fine, but neither Dinnerstein nor Jaher fully allows for the complexity of anti-Semitic thought, a characteristic which can make it difficult to identify and label. In this regard their work is less sophisticated than that of Tony Kushner's, whose studies of British anti-Semitism during the Second World War and of Jewish and non-Jewish relations in the East End of London have revealed a greater awareness of the complexities of anti-Semitism. What are we to make of Henry "Chips" Channon's reference to Leslie Hore-Belisha as "the Jew boy [derogatory] ... yet I am fond of him [complimentary]"? Such remarks, repeated by others in different contexts, underline the complexity of anti-Semitism.

Recognition of such complex layers is not new. Many years ago John Higham noted that "attractive" and "unlovely" images could coexist within the thought patterns of an individual. To refer to a specific example: Jaher quotes a slab of Nathaniel Hawthorne's prose to illustrate what he, Jaher, calls an "aversion" toward Jews. Fascinated by a beautiful woman in whom he discerned Jewish features, Hawthorne has his character remark: "I felt a sort of repugnance, simultaneously with my perception that she was an admirable creature." Yet there is a complexity here which a labeling of the observation as "aversion" is inclined to miss. To crush all

such remarks into a simple framework is to miss something of the elusive and complicated essence of such antiseptic thought.

A further observation on the essential elements of anti-Semitism needs to be made here. One of the major emphases running through Dinnerstein's and Jaher's histories is that much of the anti-Semitism in the United States can be related to the influence of Christianity. In Dinnerstein's words: "Simply put, Christian viewpoints underlie all American antisemitism," and in Jaher's view: "It is my contention that animosity embedded in Christian doctrine, while by no means the only source of anti-Semitism, has exerted a primary influence since the early days of Christianity."

This particular emphasis rings some similar chords in the history of British anti-Semitism. The ritual murder charge had its medieval origins at Norwich in 1144, and religious arguments were deployed much later against the prospect of Jewish emancipation in the nineteenth century. However, what is less emphasized by Dinnerstein and Jaher, but which provides an excellent illustration of the adaptability of anti-Semitism, a theme less noticed than its tenacity and consistency, is the way in which religious themes such as the blood libel and the Judas stereotype could lose their religious essence and become secularized. Does anyone seriously believe that when Arnold Leese, one of the most insistent and persistent anti-Semites in twentieth-century Britain, accused the Jews of ritual murder, he was drawing his ideological strength from religious impulses? No, the drive starkly revealed in his booklet *My Irrelevant Defence* (1938) came from his racial thinking; in Leese's racial view of the world, Jews were inherently sadistic. Leese was also able to link up the ritual murder charge with his immutable belief in the Jewish world conspiracy.

Moreover, the claim that religious impulses lay at the heart of anti-Semitism, a theme developed recently by, among others, Robert Wistrich in *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred*, needs to be considered against its opposite. Neither Dinnerstein nor Jaher dwells on the decline of Christian beliefs and practices in the course of the twentieth century and its effect on anti-Semitism. Both Dinnerstein and Jaher believe that anti-Semitism in the United States has been less evident since 1945 but do not attempt to link that development to a falling-off in Christian religious belief. Indeed Jaher argues that if

Christianity helped to increase anti-Semitism, it has also contributed recently to restrain it. Perhaps a decline in Christian belief and practice and a reduction in anti-Semitism do not travel in tandem in the United States. But in Britain the weakening influence of Christianity in the twentieth century has been advanced to explain why hostility toward Irish Catholics became less powerful. Can a similar argument be brought forward, to add to the other factors, such as the "recoil effect" of the Holocaust, which have been adduced by Eric Hobsbawm to account for the reduction in anti-Semitism in Britain since the end of the Second World War?

This last observation serves as a further reminder that comparative history carries its own difficulties and dangers. Dinnerstein's work, as one would expect, is a well-argued, detailed, and forceful study of anti-Semitism in the United States. But once he steps outside that boundary fence he can be exposed. On what basis would he defend his claim that "It must ... be emphasized however, that in no Christian country has antisemitism been weaker than it has been in the United States." This assertion is not supported in his book by any clinching evidence. Weaker than in Britain? Weaker than in Denmark? How do we assess strength and weakness, in fact?

Jaher's work, through its comparative approach, is able to offer more by way of wider perspectives. But, even so, such data are not subjected to prolonged analysis. Figures like Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the Englishman who became a high priest of German nationalism and Aryanism in Imperial Germany, and Edouard Drumont, editor of *La Libre Parole* and a key player in the Dreyfus affair, flit across the scene; however, they do not stay long enough to have their views interrogated at any length. Moreover, his special interest in the Holocaust leads Jaher to a serious neglect of important comparative detail on tsarist Russia, the country in which the *Protocols* began its long, influential journey and where anti-Semitism was arguably at its most ferocious in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. We need only recall the fierce journalism of P. Kruschevan, the maraudings of the Black Hundreds, the pogroms and so many other places, Kishinev, and the seemingly endless trial of Mendel Beilis between 1911 and 1913.

One might end by emphasizing the need for caution. Both Dinnerstein's and Jaher's works reveal a Whiggish tone. As time passes,

the status of the Jews in the United States continues to improve. But it requires a deep act of faith to settle down and remain satisfied with this claim, confident in the belief that Nirvana is on the horizon. In its varied forms, anti-Semitism in all societies is remarkably tenacious. In Edgar Rosenberg's words, anti-Semitic stereotypes possess a "massive durability," and some of the motor forces which have propelled anti-Semitism in the past remain in place; certainly the coterie of convinced anti-Semites stays ever-active, watching and waiting for their opportunity. The price of liberty still remains eternal vigilance.

— Calvin Holmes

Colin Holmes is a professor of history at the University of Sheffield, England. He is the author or editor of a dozen volumes on topics ranging from the process of industrialization to immigrants and minorities in British society. He is best known in the United States for his 1979 book, Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876-1939.

Weissbach, Lee Shai.

The Synagogues of Kentucky's Past.

Perspectives on Kentucky's Past:

Architecture, Archaeology, and Landscape, vol. 2.

Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995. xiv, 184 pp.

Meticulously researched and clearly organized, Lee Shai Weissbach's book is a welcome addition to the small but growing literature on American synagogue design. While particularly meaningful to Jews and Gentiles of the Bluegrass State, the study will also serve as a useful guide to neophyte historians planning inventories of other regions. Weissbach's essay on bibliography and methodology demonstrates the complexity of identifying forgotten and destroyed buildings and his resourcefulness as a detective.

A significant amount of factual information is summarized in the volume's seven tables. The first, showing the Jewish population of Kentucky in eleven cities from 1878 to 1984, foreshadows architectural trends. At present numbering approximately 13,000 residents, the Jewish population peaked in 1927 with approximately 20,000 residents. While suburban Louisville has endured as the state's Jewish center, organized Jewish life has shrunk or disappeared in such small towns as Covington, Henderson, and Newport.

Weissbach identified thirty congregations, twelve of which are still active. Louisville has both the oldest, Adath Israel, founded in 1842, and the youngest, Adat B'nai Yisrael, established in 1992. Listing the address of each synagogue, he also indicates how many buildings were previously or subsequently used as churches, residences, or offices. The author also identifies the architects or firms responsible for seventeen of the structures constructed as synagogues.

Remarkably, Weissbach obtained visual documentation for all but one of Kentucky's synagogues. In addition to photographs and drawings, he found views of buildings and neighborhoods in maps and murals. As he admits, this visual documentation forms the book's "heart and soul."

While the subtitle found on the dust jacket is *History and Architecture*, that on the title page is *Architecture and History*. Clearly, the

emphasis is on buildings as historical and social artifacts rather than as works of art. Consequently, Weissbach ably demonstrates how Kentucky's synagogues have evolved in their functions. He also shows how individual buildings mirror national (and international) revival styles, such as Gothic, Classical, Byzantine, and Georgian. Paducah's Temple Israel, for example, constructed in 1893, was a splendid Moorish folly.

In the area of architectural analysis, however, Weissbach's book is less authoritative. While conceding that Kentucky's congregations have not been "particularly innovative," he fails to indicate, especially in the period since World War II, how far they have fallen outside the realm of bold experimentation.

Indeed, nine of Kentucky's synagogues were built in the postwar era, three within the past decade. Though these buildings are convenient, pleasant, and comfortable, most lack architectural ambition and daring. Like previous styles, modernism has come to Kentucky in a generic manner, forming an easygoing and rather bland vernacular. Sadly, there is nothing in Kentucky's Jewish heritage that rivals the marriage between architectural form and spiritual values crafted by Shaker builders in the early-nineteenth-century settlements of South Union and Pleasant Hill.

Weissbach was reluctant to express either enthusiasm for or criticism of individual structures. Charitable toward congregational leaders and their building committees, he indicated that they have usually opted for Jewish architects or firms and almost always from Kentucky. A preservationist at heart, Weissbach was more concerned about the fate of Kentucky's endangered synagogues than about lost opportunities to build wonderful new structures.

Kentucky's synagogue builders were probably unaware that, for nearly a century, Jewish and Gentile architects, based primarily in Chicago and greater Detroit, offered some of America's most imaginative and challenging designs for houses of worship. At the turn of the twentieth century, for example, Dankmar Adler built four distinguished synagogues in the Windy City. In the postwar years, Erich Mendelsohn, the German emigre who had worked extensively in Palestine, built four modern synagogues in Missouri, Ohio, Michigan, and Minnesota. Other important synagogues and Hillel houses, constructed throughout the Midwest, were by Max Abramovitz,

Pietro Belluschi, Alden Dow, Percival Goodman;¹ Gyo Obata, and Minoru Yamasaki.

Impressive churches designed by Marcel Breuer, Gunnar Birkerts, Philip Johnson, and Eliel and Eero Saarinen were often found in small cities and towns. Beginning in 1942, Columbus, Indiana, under the leadership of J. Irwin Miller of Cummings Engine, became a national showplace for its dozens of churches, schools, libraries, and public places built by prominent architects.

Until 1982, when Humana commissioned Michael Graves to design a 25-story corporate headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky was never a magnet for modernism (or postmodernism). Yet Frank Lloyd Wright, for example, had built a residence for a minister in Frankfort, the commonwealth's capital, in 1909. In the 1950s, he built several homes in Ohio, including a number for Jewish clients in Canton and Cincinnati.

Had Kentucky's congregational leaders sought expert advice, they might have turned to three German emigres, all knowledgeable about current trends. Franz Landsberger, the former director of Berlin's Jewish Museum, was curator of Jewish art at Cincinnati's Hebrew Union College. Indeed, in the late 1930s, the emigre scholar Richard Krautheimer, who had published a study of medieval synagogue architecture, was a professor at the University of Louisville. Justus Bier also taught at Louisville, wrote criticism for the *Courier-Journal*, and was director of the Speed Art Museum.

Important architecture is created not only by gifted architects but by adventurous clients. Some of the most distinguished patrons of modern buildings have been Jews, including Michael Stein (Le Corbusier), Phillip Lovell (Rudolf Schindler and Richard Neutra), Edgar Kaufmann and Solomon Guggenheim (Frank Lloyd Wright), Edgar Bronfman and Herbert Greenwald (Mies van der Rohe), and Jonas Salk (Louis Kahn). Evidently, Kentucky Jewry lacked a visionary, either a rabbi or a lay person, to create a synagogue of wide and lasting importance.

Kentucky Jewry's reticence and lack of imagination point to several larger problems. American synagogue architecture needs not only careful documentation but a new comprehensive study, focusing on the modern movement. Similarly, there is a need, particularly in

the visual arts, to narrow the gulf that divides conventional Jewish institutions from the new images and ideas espoused by significant artists, many of them Jews. While inspiration may come from a more cosmopolitan city than Lexington or Louisville, Weissbach's book demonstrates that every new synagogue commission is precious and represents an opportunity to renew and reinterpret Jewish tradition.

—George M. Goodwin

George M. Goodwin is an historian and oral interviewer. Among his scores of interviews have been many of the world's leading architects.

Note

1. See George H. Goodwin, "The Design of a Modern Synagogue: Percival Goodman's Beth-El in Providence, Rhode Island," *American Jewish Archives* 45 (Spring-Summer 1993): 31-71.

Fish, Sidney M.

Barnard and Michael Gratz: Their Lives and Times.

Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1994. 255 pp.

In his foreword to Sidney Fish's valuable new book, the late Jacob R. Marcus remarks that the Gratz brothers came to America, like most other immigrants, in search of success. Barnard and Michael Gratz were remarkable not for their desires, but for the unusual degree to which they fulfilled them despite the hazards attending both immigration and financial ventures during the second half of the eighteenth century. Relying almost wholly on the extensive Gratz-Etting papers at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and on the records of Philadelphia's Mikveh Israel synagogue, Fish reconstructs the European conditions propelling the brothers westward as well as the better-known events of their lives in North America. Unlike other volumes about them, his looks primarily at their business affairs and secondarily at their communal leadership.

Although Fish does not draw this conclusion, his detailed account makes plain that from their childhood as orphans living among relations in Silesia, the Gratz brothers learned to rely on familial ties. Fish traces the origin of the Gratz name to the brothers' father, who fled violence in Langendorf for Grodziska (Gratz), only to return to Langendorf as a refugee from Poland. As Fish notes, both parents died before peace returned to the area in 1748. The boys, born in the 1730s, moved in with an older brother, Hayim, one of the few men who held a license to distribute liquor and who was an important leader and philanthropist in the Jewish community of Tworog. Their formal education suffered, but not their training in the merchant trade. By 1760, Barnard and Michael had lived in London with a cousin, Solomon Henry, from whom they learned the merchant shipping business, and had settled in Philadelphia, where Solomon's brother and business partners lived. They had worked for his partners, David Franks and Nathan Levy, and had risked their own ventures in partnership with each other. Although Barnard traveled a direct route from Tworog to London to Philadelphia, the younger Michael tried to succeed on his own in Berlin, Holland, and India

before joining his brother in Philadelphia. By then they had both learned that success was more likely to occur along family lines.

Other historians have noted that colonial Jewish merchants frequently used family ties to create merchant shipping partnerships around the Atlantic rim. Fish's account illustrates the Gratz brothers' early participation in that sort of venture. Yet, with fewer family resources than some others, the Gratz brothers turned to their fellow Jews. Michael arrived in Philadelphia with Hebrew prayer books and tefillin among his stock of saleable goods. His first customers were David Franks and his brother, Barnard. The brothers' marriages to the daughters of a Jewish trader in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, also brought them into business partnerships with non-Jews. No doubt to their surprise, they learned that relationships with non-Jews could be smoother than relationships with Jews. As Fish explains, their share of the earnings from partnerships with their father-in-law was hard-won and often fought over in the courts.

The great strength of Fish's volume is his attention to the detail of the brothers' lives, and to the effect of America, a vastly new context for Jewish life, on their efforts to both thrive financially and to strengthen the feeble Jewish communal institutions they found on their arrival in Philadelphia. However, while Fish points to Michael's tefillin and prayer books as markers of his piety, he neglects to draw the obvious conclusion that Michael expected that the Jews of North America would be his first and most reliable customers. Applying lessons he had learned in Europe, Michael turned to Jews for financial improvement. When the brothers' land speculations in the Ohio valley were immobilized by the American Revolution and British occupation of key travel routes, Michael was especially quick to turn to shipping kosher meat to the Jews of Curaçao.

But the minuscule size of the American Jewish population, along with the need to work with non-Jews in the complex legal transactions involved in land speculation, inevitably drew the Gratz brothers into involvement with the larger political and social life of America. Changes in government and law resulted in legal entanglements and lawsuits that created allies among non-Jewish partners, officials, and attorneys. Their shipping ventures brought them into the revolution on the side of the patriots—the best social and political move a Philadelphian could make.

Nonetheless, while the brothers entered into limited partnerships with non-Jews, only Michael's sons were brought into the family business. Ever conscious of family and Jewish ties, Michael and Barnard devoted time, effort, and money to the development of their synagogue and its functioning. Most of Michael's sons (Barnard had none) continued to lead Mikveh Israel. More coherent synopses of the Gratz leadership years, which continued into the 1850s under Michael's children's guidance, can be found elsewhere.

Fish's contribution is to offer the details of the financial and communal efforts of Michael and Barnard Gratz, men whose influence ended with the dawn of the nineteenth century. He quotes heavily from their correspondence, business records, and relevant portions of the records of Mikveh Israel. For anyone who cannot get to an archive where a portion of the enormous Gratz papers are housed, his book will be an important aid. By focusing on these two brothers, it reveals the struggles, frustrations, and successes experienced by the colonial merchants who established Jewish life in America. Certainly, more needs to be learned about that part of American and Jewish history. Yet, Fish could have done more to link their story to that of merchants elsewhere, or to Jewish merchants in other parts of the country, or to larger events, other than wars, that shaped the economy in the late eighteenth century. The full story of the Gratz financial dynasty remains untold, but by limiting his work to a close-up look at Michael and Barnard Gratz, Professor Fish has written an important chapter in that saga.

—Dianne Ashton

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Lipset, Seymour Martin, and Earl Raab

Jews and the New American Scene

Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995. viii, 239 pp.

Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab have written the book to read to understand the current state of the Jewish community and what it portends for the future of Jewish life in America. In a tight and balanced 200-plus pages, they have managed to summarize the dominant forces that have shaped the modern Jewish community and help the reader to weigh the dangers and opportunities that lie ahead — no small accomplishment at a time when a frenzy of books, studies, articles, and communal discussions have done as much to obfuscate as illuminate issues of Jewish continuity.

True enough, they have not added a great deal that is new, which has brought down criticism on them. Reflecting, nevertheless, the distilled wisdom and experience of two veteran social analysts, this book will be the jumping-off point for policy makers and concerned Jews for many years to come.

Their reading of the situation can be quickly summarized. The maintenance of Jewish identity from earliest times to comparatively recently was based on religious adherence and the Jewish tradition. Encounters with anti-Semitism mainly outside this country and sometimes within, threats to Israel's safety and security, and the liberal-left political tradition (a Jewish subreligion in itself) provided much of the glue of Jewish consciousness.

The ability of these elements to hold Jews together, they suggest, has been eroding under the extraordinarily benign American experience, which, unlike in Europe, permits few caste-like structures. Temple and synagogue attendance is low. The broader acceptance of Jews by other Americans has made Jews indistinguishable in the social landscape, as evidenced by the high rate of intermarriage, the election of Jews to high political office, often in parts of the country where there are few of them, the appointment of other Jews to major posts (the elevation of Ruth Bader Ginsberg and Stephen Breyer to the Supreme Court took place with virtually no public dis-

cussion of their Jewish background), and peace prospects in the Middle East.

Turning to American Jewish history, Lipset and Raab devote separate chapters to these subjects which, apart from the light they shed on the Jewish future, are genuine gems of up-to-date information and analysis. Another useful thing the authors do is to frame their discussion against the background and experience of other ethnic and religious groups, particularly newer infusions of Asians and Hispanics. While recognizing the continued saliency of certain aspects of ethnicity, particularly among African-Americans, they argue, nevertheless, that there has been a decline in tribalism which, of course, also affects the situation of Jews.

Obviously in so wide-ranging an attempt to understand the American Jewish experience, one can find areas with which one can differ. I, for one, had difficulty accepting their reading of the decline in tribalism. Indeed, one can argue, along with Sir Isaiah Berlin and Pope John Paul II, that tribalism has become the dominant force of the century.

This can be seen not only in the terrible tragedies following the break-up of Yugoslavia as well as in parts of Africa, Northern Ireland, and the former Soviet Union but in this country as well. In addition to the rise of black nationalism even among more assimilated elites and newer demands for bilingualism and multiculturalism, the reemergence of an estimated 30 to 50 million Protestant evangelicals contending for "Christian values" like Bible reading and prayer in the schools, and of campaigns by the Roman Catholic Church to ban abortion and obtain publicly funded vouchers for financially strapped parochial schools (their Israel in terms of group survival), suggest with striking force that there is a tribal basis to American life. That is, we are not simply 240 million individuals striving for personal well-being but a nation of nations and regions colliding and finding accommodation as we pursue group interests, values, and styles of life.

I had trouble, too, although here I know I am in a distinct minority, in accepting their conventional reading of continued and future Jewish liberalism. True enough, the Jewish vote for George Bush dropped to about 10 percent in 1992 and Jews stood solidly against the political currents in the off-year 1994 elections that brought Newt

Gingrich to power. Despite this, there are abundant signs that Jews are turning to the right. They find it difficult to express this as yet, because to do so clashes with their self-image as protectors of the disadvantaged and discriminated-against and their deep fear of the growth of the Christian Right. In major cities like Philadelphia, Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles, where they feel more directly threatened by urban and racial violence, the Jewish vote for conservative mayoralty candidates has grown markedly in recent years. The most striking example is in New York City, where two out of three Jewish voters cast their ballots in the last two elections against liberal (and black) David L. Dinkins, resulting in the election of Rudolph W. Giuliani in 1994. A year earlier, exit polls showed that approximately half the Jewish vote in Los Angeles went to what turned out to be the successful conservative candidate. We have little information as yet on the political attitudes of younger Jews, but there are signs here too that they are somewhat at variance with the political faith of their parents.

And even as they devote considerable space to Jewish "exceptionalism" and the benign atmosphere for Jews in this country, Lipset and Raab are themselves forced to admit the extraordinary ironies and contradictions that mark the American Jewish experience. Yes, Jews are more fully accepted and are more comfortable in speaking to power in this country. Yet, curiously, Jewish parents, they note, find it difficult to speak to their children on why it is important to transmit the Jewish heritage. And even as acceptance of Jews has grown, fear of anti-Semitism has grown rather than declined.

Perhaps Jews understand viscerally what sometimes escapes our cosmopolitan elites: that in some respects Jews constitute a counter-culture in American life. We vote differently, at least in national elections, oppose Bible reading and prayer in the schools, are pro-choice on abortion, and emphasize individual rights and freedom of expression much more so than other Americans, many of whom, alarmed by the breakdown of societal norms and the growth of a new paganism, are seeking greater restraints and the introduction of "Christian values" in society. So far, thank God, Jews have not suffered any unusual penalties for this, but one can only wonder at our good fortune, particularly when the moratorium on criticism of Jews that began around the end of World War II seems to have lapsed.

But even where one can differ with Lipset and Raab's reading of contemporary currents, it is a joy to watch such skilled and experienced minds at work.

On assessing the Jewish future, they are balanced and thoughtful. They report that the number of Jews will decline in coming years even as they note the increases among Hasidim and the Orthodox. These groups, they suggest, provide "the strongest deterrent to the swift or complete dissolution of American Jewry." This core, "strongly and visibly committed to the tribal and religious depth of Jewish tradition could be the magnet that draws back some." They are aware, nevertheless, that this "fragile remnant" (Disraeli's term), while encouraging, will not in and by itself lead a modern generation of Jews to turn away from the growing affluence and acceptance that have weakened American Jewry as a community. Nevertheless, in one of the few prescriptions they make for communal survival, Lipset and Raab urge that educational policy focus on the core of traditional Jews and fellow travelers rather than on outreach programs to the more "ragged edges" of Jewish life.

In summing up, they take some comfort in the growing hunger in the land for a sense of community and spiritual meaning in an increasingly rootless and normless society. "Even though dispersion from neighborhoods and parishes is an American fact of life," they point out, "religion-connected groups, with their distinctive rituals and practices," are in a good position "to establish lines of community beyond geographical boundaries." (If I may be personal and anecdotal for a moment, I have noticed—and some of my friends have called attention to this as well—the considerable number of young people and their infants showing up recently at High Holiday services.) To this one might add the newfound recognition among Americans of the validity of religio-ethnic identity, which contrasts so sharply with the authors' experience growing up, and makes it easier for group survival in an increasingly heterogeneous and chaotic society.

All of which is to suggest that, as Mark Twain remarked in another context, the notices of the demise of the Jewish community may be somewhat premature. A significant base and still formidable organizational structure remain in place, in the form of temples and synagogues and fraternal and philanthropic organizations, for the three-

quarters of all Jews in this country touched in some way by some aspect of Jewishness to repair to, as, for the first time in diaspora history, we are free to remain Jews by choice.

—Murray Friedman

Murray Friedman is Middle Atlantic States director of the American Jewish Committee and director of the Center for American Jewish History at Temple University. His most recent book is What Went Wrong: The Creation and Collapse of the Black Jewish Alliance (Free Press, 1995).

Lavender, Abraham D., and Clarence B. Steinberg.
Jewish Farmers of the Catskills: A Century of Survival.
Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995. 271 pp.

When I received this book for review, I was pleased to note another volume on Jewish farmers. In the Catskills! I knew that the famous Jewish hotels — Grossinger's, the Nevele, the Concord — had started out as humble farms whose owners needed to supplement their farm income and rented rooms to paying guests. These early beginnings spawned the "Borscht Belt," a major resort industry within striking distance of New York City. I was prepared to give *Jewish Farmers of the Catskills* my unqualified blessing, for whatever it may be worth.

Certainly, the book provides additional insights on the evolving history of American Jewish farmers. The rural experience of Jewish immigrants has been shamefully ignored by academics of all stripes. The only farming efforts that have received attention are the early, short-lived, and failed Jewish farm communal experiments established around the turn of the century. Thus, Lavender and Steinberg, recording a "century of survival," prove that Jewish farming in America was more than just a passing fancy.

Up front, however, on page 2, the authors' tone verges on the apologetic: "The image of American Jews as nonfarming urbanites is usually correct." It might be true that the majority of American Jews are not and were not farmers. But nobody has yet done the demographics to demonstrate the range of occupations in which Jewish immigrants were engaged. No accurate figures are available on how many immigrants left the American cities where they landed and struck out across the country. Where they went and what they did for how long are difficult questions to answer.

The census of 1880 records that the greater number of Russians living in America at that time were engaged in agricultural pursuits. In this census, Christians and Jews were classified together as Russians. In 1885, the imperial Russian government set a policy which prohibited all emigration except that of Poles and Jews. Students of Jewish demography have concluded that the Russian emigration at the end of the nineteenth century consisted almost entirely of Jews.

In the breakdown of occupations in the 1890 census, we find that of the 80,708 male Russians identified by the census, more than 11 percent were farmers, more than 4 percent were farm laborers, 2 percent were lumbermen, almost 9 percent were miners and quarrymen. Tailors were 13.98 percent, and merchants and dealers were represented by 7.73 percent. In other words, more than 26 percent of this migration were in non-urban occupations, and a significant number were found in agricultural pursuits. The 1890 census shows also that more than two-thirds of the Russian emigres settled somewhere other than in the North Atlantic region. It is this movement, the out-migration of Jews from the cities, that has not been studied.

By the account of the authors, the Catskills had the largest population of Jewish farmers in the United States. The Jewish Agricultural Society (JAS) established its third regional office in Ellenville, New York, in 1919, and it was in operation until 1945. The first regional office was opened in the Chicago area in 1912 and lasted until 1952. The second was in Philadelphia, open from 1917 to 1935. The same year the Ellenville office closed, the JAS opened an office in Los Angeles. In 1952, a regional office was set up in Vineland, New Jersey, where a large number of Holocaust survivors settled on farms. In all, the JAS had five regional offices and a national office in New York City. In addition, many Jews settled on farms without the assistance of the JAS. Surely, the geographic dispersion of JAS offices provides strong proof of the vitality of the Jewish farm movement in America.

Yet, with all that, *Jewish Farmers of the Catskills* is a disappointing book. Photographs of small rural synagogues in and around Sullivan County attest to the fact that Jews not only settled on farms since the early years of the twentieth century, but they also led Jewish lives. But except for the pictures, there is very little Jewish context in the farmers' rural experience as described by Lavender and Steinberg.

They state that Jewish farm youth had "positive feelings about their Jewish identity." Further, they assert: "Few of the children and grandchildren of the Jewish farmers were lost to the Jewish community by converting or marrying out of their faith." But missing from the book is how the Jewish farmers managed the nuts and bolts of creating Jewish lives and Jewish institutions to meet their Jewish needs and foster ethnic ties.

In their effort to paint with a broad brush, the authors mention a

number of communities, but they fail to give a convincing picture of any one community or one family. I would have liked to know more about Yana Gerson and his family, who settled on a farm in Glen Wild, near Woodbridge, in 1892. Descendants of the family are still living in the area. The Gersons were joined in 1904 by "the Cohen brothers on Church Road and the Solomons, Gordons, Berkman, Goldbergs, Marcusses, and others," all of whom lived and farmed around Glen Wild.

Apparently, in the first quarter of the century, there were clusters of small Jewish farm communities in Sullivan and Ulster counties of New York State. In 1937, there were a considerable number of Jewish farmers in and around the towns of Ellenville, Monticello, Liberty, Granite, Accord, Jeffersonville, Youngville, Parksville, and others. These places are like names without faces. We know little about them.

We are told that the Jewish farmers followed the practice of Christian farmers and supplemented their farm income by renting out rooms to city dwellers. We learn of their building cooperative marketing and purchasing organizations for the benefit of all the farmers, and of other laudable cooperative efforts to improve roads and schools. But we get little sense of the extent of their efforts to maintain their distinctive culture.

There are passing references to the farmers abandoning Yiddish. There are chauvinistic observations about Jewish superiority, especially in education. The children of Jewish farmers in the Catskills, as well as the children of the Jewish cobblers, plumbers, and small storekeepers, "not only made the honor rolls in college preparatory courses, but they also went to college." The gross generalities continue. According to the authors, the Jews and their children who left their "farms in the Catskills were more worldly than those who left farms elsewhere."

We get mixed messages concerning the strength of the farmers' Judaism. On the one hand, the authors claim there was a rebirth of Jewish consciousness following the Holocaust and the formation of the State of Israel. On the other, they tell of socialists, leaning toward atheism, who refused "to live in the shuls." And of others who believed or feared "that strict observance would hinder assimilation to 'American' (i.e., Christian) society." Concerning contemporary Jews, who can be found in the shuls only on Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kip-

pur, one would discover "that these farmers are inwardly praying for the same thing for which most other American farmers pray—higher profits." These speculative musings undermine the integrity of the book.

The Jewish farm movement in America was sandwiched between major events in world and American history, most of which impacted very seriously on Jews and others: pogroms in Russia at the end of the nineteenth century, World War I, the worldwide depression, the rise of Hitler and Nazism, World War II, the Holocaust, the creation of Israel, McCarthyism, the FBI's surveillance (especially of Jewish farmers), the Korean War, the collapse of small family farm operations in America. This is hardly an exhaustive list. How did Jewish farmers react to these situations? Surely they were praying for more than higher profits when they were in shul. They might have been thinking about their relatives caught in the grip of the German menace or in the failed policies of the Soviet Communists. What did they do as Jews?

I further am disappointed, and even distressed, by what I interpret to be the authors' buying into clichés and stereotypes that have been broadcast about the Jewish farmer. One concerns the patriotism of Jews.

The authors write: "There were some Jewish individuals who wanted to avoid military service. Because farmers were deferred from military service, a number of wealthy New York Jewish needlecraft factory owners found in the Catskills places both near enough and far enough away to hide their sons" (p. 53). In a later place in the book (p. 142), the authors cite statistics to show that when Jewish farmers' participation in World War II is compared to that of all male farmers, Jews participated in a higher percentage than others. One wonders why the previous anecdotal slur needed to be included.

The old saw that Jews came on the farm to keep their sons out of the war still surfaces in Farmingdale, New Jersey, where I grew up. It was recently incorporated in a new municipal plan which had, as a preface, an introductory history including the township's previous tenants, Jewish farmers. Disclaiming the impact and/or the contribution of these farmers, the text asserted that the Jews really had been interested in a convenient way for their sons to stay out of service. (When a Jewish farmer, still living in Farmingdale, threatened to

sue the township, the offensive sentence was removed from the reprinted edition of the plan.)

Another cliché: "Most of these potential farmers approached the farms with the hardheaded hope of making more money on them than they could as sweatshop workers." Over and over again, in my work, I have confronted these stereotypes designed to show that Jews were at heart not farmers, but concerned primarily with making money. As if the wheat farmer in Kansas is not concerned with making money, or the cattle rancher in Texas.

Realistically, what chance of financial success did the poor immigrant Jews have as farmers? They had arrived in the country at the turn of the century and typically spent five or ten years in New York City. They left the comfort and security of the community of Jews in New York or Philadelphia to settle on primitive farms in regions where they knew neither the language nor the manners of rural America. They were heavily indebted to relatives and friends from whom they borrowed the down payment. Most had no farm experience to draw upon. That they succeeded is in large measure due to their tenacity and imagination. If they were asked why they decided to farm, they might have responded, "To make a living." But their motivations were much more complicated than that. Of course, they wanted and needed to earn a living. But, primarily, they wanted to live. In the city, many were literally dying in the crowded tenement houses and insufferable sweatshops.

I wonder why it is so hard to accept the fact that Jews are diverse, just like the population at large. A certain percentage wanted to be farmers; America made that dream possible, and they followed it to the Catskills, and to New Jersey, Connecticut, Texas, California, Michigan, and points north and south, east and west. It is as simple as that.

In addition to stereotypes and generalizations, the text of the book is seriously marred by long, convoluted sentences and paragraphs that are not coherent. At least, this reader often was lost in a maze of wandering sentences. Nor did I appreciate the breezy comparisons concerning the success or failure of disparate Jewish farm communities. One example suffices:

Histories of the New Jersey colonies agree [where?] on its hard-

ships. Jewish farming in central New Jersey survived in part thanks to the society, but it never attracted the thousands the society had hoped it would. [Throughout the book, the JAS is referred to as "the society." The lower-case s is incorrect and confusing.] Neither did the Jews who tried farming there even in later years, in the postcolonizing, idealistic period, persist as long as did Jews farming equally good or worse land a few hundred miles north. Jews growing potatoes and raising ducks on Long Island in the first third of the twentieth century appear to have held on to their farms longer than Jerseyites. Unlike the New Jersey Jewish farmers early in the century, Long Island Jewish farmers began as individualists out to make money in farming. They [antecedent ambiguous—New Jersey or Long Island Jewish farmers?] were more like the Russian Jewish farmers not connected with colonies. They [who?] expected no steam heat, music, weekly paycheck, or Yiddish theater. [Which immigrant farmers expected these luxuries? The notion itself is ridiculous.] They knew that farming profits did not match those of, say, dressmaking, but they would risk less capital in farming than one would in a dress factory and were willing to make a lower profit accordingly.

(p.24)

The University Press of Florida ought to have provided better editorial supervision. But the authors are to blame for repeatedly using clichés and generalizations.

Stubborn academics who have maintained that the Jewish farmer in America is an oxymoron will have to reexamine their blind assurance. A few more books on Jewish farmers will make it possible for social historians to do comparative studies of various Jewish farm communities dispersed across the whole of the United States. Perhaps then we will get a balanced view of Jewish American history which finally will encompass the rural as well as the urban experience.

—Gertrude W. Dubrovsky

Gertrude W. Dubrovsky is a writer whose special interest is the rural experience of Jews in America. She is associated with the Center for Jewish Life at Princeton University. Dr. Dubrovsky is the author of The Land Was Theirs: Jewish Farmers in the Garden State and has produced a documentary film with the same title.

Lesser, Jeffrey.

Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question.

Berkeley and Los Angeles:

University of California Press, 1995. xvii, 280 pp.

This work by Jeffrey Lesser, based on detailed and thoroughly documented research in Jewish and non-Jewish archives in Brazil, the United States, and other countries, constitutes an important contribution to the study of Brazilian immigration policies and attitudes toward Jewish refugees on the eve of and during World War II.¹

By defining Brazilian society as "ethnic" as well as "racial," Lesser analyzes the shaping of the Brazilian racial and ethnic social paradigm, and poses new questions about the interrelationship of immigrant groups, immigration policy, and national identity. In studying the Jewish Question, he clarifies the ideological trends that allowed Brazil's elites to establish criteria of inclusion and exclusion for Brazilian nationality that defined the role immigrants would play in the construction of the country.

Within the frame of what we could call a nation-building project for Brazil, massive European immigration to that country was stimulated, starting around 1890, as a way of transforming an economy based on slavery to one based on waged labor. The idea that immigrants would assimilate to Brazil's urban culture expressed not only expectations about white European immigrants manifested since the end of the nineteenth century, but the twentieth-century effort to define an authentic Brazilian culture, denying the viability of elements considered foreign.

In this sense, Lesser calls attention to the enormous influence that the Integralista program for fostering a Brazilian national identity had on the selection of immigrants. Inspired by Nazism and fascism, these Brazilian nationalists were anti-immigrant and anti-Jewish. Under the *brasiliidade* ("Brazilianess") advocated by the nationalist Vargas regime lay an essential supposition that took for granted the existence of a "national being" that ought to be preserved.

Those who dictated Brazilian immigration policy prioritized the intensive "Aryanization" of the country's ethnic composition. The

arrival of immigrant groups like the Jews, who were "not genuinely European," strengthened negative judgments about Brazil's racial and ethnic heterogeneity in contrast to the desired goal of assimilation. By opposing the unrestricted admission of Jews, who were perceived as undesirable, Brazilian diplomats in Europe were transformed into protectors of Brazilianness instead of promoters of their country's economic growth.

In twentieth-century Brazil, Lesser points out, "race, ethnicity, and nationality were so closely linked that it became virtually impossible to distinguish between them." This tendency was typical of ideas current at the time, for in that period a pseudoscientific racism prevailed which not only postulated the existence of racial categories, such as Aryan and Semite, but attributed a genetic origin to their supposed cultural features. Going beyond the social idea of race, the categorization context of ethnicity comprised both biological and cultural identity, factors which social anthropologists have only separated in recent decades.²

On this base, the Integralistas sought to use social engineering as a means of shaping nationality, perceived in racial terms, by means of eugenics. Jewish refugees were transformed from undesirable elements into welcome ones, however, by the simple act of entering the country, since residing in Brazil, states Lesser, enabled a person to become a component of Brazilian "racial homogeneity."

In its beginnings, Brazilian anti-Semitism, copying anti-Semitic stereotypes of European origin, was directed more to imaginary Jews than at the few real, visible Jews living in the country.³ The transformation of religion into a racial category during the Vargas era marked a significant change in the discourse regarding Jewish immigrants. This became evident when a group of refugees of Jewish origin but baptized as Catholics were refused visas.

Brazilian non-Jewish intellectuals adopted the same categorizations when defending Jews, showing that they shared the racist paradigm. For instance, they claimed that "congenital Semitic industriousness" would contribute to the nation's greatness. But the incompatibility between Nazi Aryan theory and Brazil's racially and ethnically mixed society was notorious. The program of building a Brazilian nation in the European image contrasted with the foun-

dational character that the mixture of Portuguese, Indians, and Africans had imprinted on the country's population.

The German and Italian Jewish refugees who arrived in growing numbers after 1932 possessed a cultural background perceived as undeniably valuable to progress and development, and therefore "they were less easily categorized as undesirable, and more as immigrants whose skills and capital would help Brazil's industrial development." By manipulating images of Jews and playing on prejudice, Jewish leaders convinced Brazilian policymakers that Jewish immigration would have economic and political value.⁴ From 1938 onward, the traditional anti-Semitic images of Jews as "urban based, nonfarming, financially oriented, and internationally powerful" came to be considered signs of their usefulness for Brazil's economic success. Negative stereotypes of Jews were restated positively, increasing the survival possibilities for thousands of refugees. As a result, almost 25,000 Jews once considered undesirables by the Vargas regime legally entered Brazil between 1938 and 1942, thereby escaping Nazi persecution. When Brazil joined the Allies, Jewish agricultural colonization was used to legitimize the presence of an immigrant group integrated into Brazilian society. In this way Brazil strengthened its alliance with the United States through the increased admission of Jewish refugees.

In seeking an explanation for racial persecution, Roger Bastide points out the combination of frustrations that are projected on a different Other, theorizing that the minority objects of persecution are perceived by sectors of the majority society as competitors for the allocation of resources.⁵ This has certainly been the case with the Jewish refugees in Brazil, since the country's urban working and middle classes have increasingly perceived immigrants as competitors for education, jobs, and social rank.

Having multiplied their number five times in two decades, and many of them having successfully climbed the economic ladder, Jewish immigrants became a focus of attention among Brazilian intellectuals and officials because of their "surplus visibility." As Lesser states, "This combination of economic success and cultural difference made Jews particular targets of nativists after the Depression."

Due to economic specialization and their tendency to concentrate in their own, self-created occupational niches, especially in the tex-

tile industry, Jews behaved quite in accordance with what is expected of a "middleman minority." The visibility of such minorities as foreign and their salience as a separate ethnic group are factors which influence the way they are perceived by members of the majority.⁶

Throughout his book, Lesser states as a central point the issue of the Jews' ambiguity as a "minority group that was simultaneously the same and different." Jews were considered both "greedy capitalists" and "evil communists," they were urban dwellers by nature and could never be farmers. Being criminals, they were, however, too "successful." Strikingly, many Brazilians held anti- and philo-Semitic notions at the same time when referring to Jewish stereotypes. The debate was, therefore, over "how to deal with immigrants who were considered simultaneously economically desirable and culturally undesirable." As the author states, "it is this clash between the elite's expectations of immigrants and the Jew's nonconformity to these expectations that provides the background for the longest part of this study."

Between 1920 and 1930, with the arrival of some 30,000 Jews, Brazil became the third-most-important country for Jewish immigration in the Americas, positioned after the United States and Argentina. But by 1934 immigration quotas had been established via a new constitution, whose clear nativism expressed the growing xenophobia that had overtaken urban Brazil. The perception of Jews as a dangerous "other" to whom immigration rights should be denied is evident in the complaint of Brazilian diplomats in Poland that granting entry to Jews would lead to an "invasion of degenerate elements, parasitic and unassimilable."

Brazilian nativism evolved into anti-Jewish policy when, shortly before the coup d'état that established the *Estado Novo* in 1937, a secret circular was released forbidding the granting of visas to persons of "Semitic origin." But these prohibitions did not stop the flow of refugees; instead of being discouraged, Jews managed to work within the system. The Jewish Colonization Association, for instance, increasingly helped resident immigrants use the preferential treatment given to farmers as a means of slicing through the bureaucracy. Besides, the law was open to different interpretations and sometimes ignored.

At the Evian Conference, convened in July 1938 to examine the

possibilities for mass resettlement of Jewish refugees from Germany, Brazil joined with most of the other countries of America in refusing to accept "non-Aryan" refugees. Little by little, however, the restrictions loosened. While keeping its doors closed to poor Jews, the *Estado Novo* admitted Jews who had some capital. The appointment of pro-Jewish Oswaldo Aranha as foreign minister combined with international pressure to accept refugees led to the issuance of new rules in 1938, reopening Brazil to Jewish immigration to such a degree that more arrived than in the preceding ten years. When Brazil entered the war on the side of the Allies in August 1942, the country's Jews were able to legitimately fight against anti-Semitism and still be "good Brazilians." It should be mentioned that attitudes toward resident refugees were quite open and liberal even in times when Jewish immigration was restricted.

This work, which focuses on official policies and the ideology of the elites, deserves to be complemented by an inquiry into the popular *imaginaire*. The image of the Jews should be positioned in the Brazilian continuum of classifications, because even if Jews may have been "nonwhite" or "not genuinely European" for the elites, were they really perceived as such by the masses? Bastide's reflections, stating that in Brazil anybody descended from a white ancestor is viewed as white, in accordance with the social idea of race, seem to suggest how popular categorizations take shape in this country.⁷

Lesser also states that "Jews found themselves singled out for negative treatment by the Brazilian government — unlike the Japanese. Jews had no official diplomatic representation and were thus an easy target." But, in fact, was not the support extended by Brazilian and world Jewish agencies important and influential in defending Jewish interests? As Lesser's work shows, public and government opinion in the United States and in other Allied countries was taken into consideration when Brazilian policies were defined and redefined, and this constituted a significant support for the immigration of Jewish refugees to Brazil.

— Daniel Bargman

Daniel Bargman is an anthropologist in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and specializes in the Jewish identity and interethnic relations.

Notes

1. To set this study in context with the policies of other Latin American countries, see Leonardo Senkman, *Argentina: La Segunda Guerra Mundial y los refugiados indescables, 1933-1945* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1992). For research about the emigration of Jewish refugees from Nazism based on oral history, see Alfredo José Schwarcz, *Y a pesar de todo: Los judíos de habla alemana en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1991). The great diversity of sources used for this work may have led to certain slight errors of fact, such as the mention of a so-called "Uruguayan Federal Police."

2. See Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970).

3. As in Argentina in 1890, when Julián Martel, in his novel *La Bolsa*, blamed Jews for the financial crisis, though there were very few in the country at the time.

4. Brazilian anthropologist Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira developed the concept of "ethnic identity manipulation" in his article on "Identidad étnica, identificación y manipulación," *América Indígena* 30, no. 4 (1971).

5. Roger Bastide, *El prójimo y el extraño* (Buenos Aires: Amorrortu, 1970).

6. According to Walter Zenner, "Middleman Minorities and Genocide," in *Genocide and the Modern Age: A Cross Cultural Analysis*, ed. Wallemmin and Dobkowski (State University of New York Press, 1987); Ivan Light and Edna Bonacich, *Immigrant Entrepreneurs: Koreans in Los Angeles, 1965-1982* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988). For a case study on middlemen minorities in Latin America, see also Daniel Bargman and Mirta Bialogorski, "Articulación interétnica en medio urbano: judíos y coreanos en Buenos Aires" (Paper presented at Seventh International Conference of the Latin American Jewish Studies Association, Mexico City, November 11-14, 1995).

7. Bastide, *El prójimo y el extraño*.

Baskin, Judith R., Edited by.
Women of the Word: Jewish Women and Jewish Writing.
Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994. 382 pp.

Fishman, Sylvia Barack, Edited by.
Follow My Footprints:
Changing Images of Women in American Jewish Fiction.
Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1992. xv, 506 pp.

It has been twenty years since the publication of *The Jewish Woman in America*, edited by Charlotte Baum, Paula Hyman, and Sonya Michel, and *The Jewish Woman: New Perspectives*, edited by Elizabeth Koltun. Since the mid-1970s, at least thirty additional texts have contributed to the development of Jewish Women's Studies. These publications have ranged in date and scope from the 1982 *Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology*, edited by Evelyn Torton Beck, and the 1984 *Women and Jewish Law: An Exploration of Women's Issues in Halakhic Sources*, by Rachel Biale, to the 1992 *Four Centuries of Jewish Women's Spirituality*, edited by Ellen Umansky and Dianne Ashton, and the 1995 *Rachel Caloff's Story: Jewish Homesteader on the Northern Plains*.

The political-social activism of women and Women's Studies in the United States has influenced and gained impetus from this exponential increase in interest in Jewish women. Integral to a process of reclaiming, and in some cases redefining, Jewish identity has been the rediscovery of Jewish women's voices, histories, and creativity. And because most of this work has been done by Jewish women themselves, it has been produced with great passion.

While there are as yet no Jewish Women's Studies associations or university departments per se, increasing numbers of conferences, publications, and courses imply that Jewish Women's Studies is now a legitimate field, a sphere in which we both validate the experiences of Jewish women as well as learn to understand the variations and connections among those experiences. Within this field, we can, for example, read Rachel Caloff's personal narrative along with the Umansky/Ashton anthology and begin to appreciate how Jewish women have defined their spirituality in the context of extreme

challenges—challenges as dramatic as emigrating from Russia to the United States, marrying a stranger upon arrival, and immediately heading to North Dakota as a homesteader.

What I am tentatively labeling Jewish Women's Studies has grown primarily within the United States, and therefore within an environment which cultivates individualism, requires assimilation of immigrants, and takes nationhood for granted. These conditions have created for Jewish women the privileged opportunity to study gender as a discrete category of analysis, to be taken seriously as scholars, and to assume that a Jewish identity is compatible with an American identity. However, these same conditions have sometimes generated alienation from both traditional Jewish communities and "secular" institutions in the United States.

The two anthologies under review here, Judith R. Baskin's *Women of the Word: Jewish Women and Jewish Writing* and Sylvia Barack Fishman's *Follow My Footprints: Changing Images of Women in American Jewish Fiction*, contribute actively to the construction of Jewish Women's Studies. Specifically, both illuminate the complexity of Jewish women's relationships to words, and both examine words as sites of a struggle for historical and contemporary representation of Jewish women.

Women of the Word includes sixteen essays, four of which discuss the depiction of women in texts written by men and twelve of which focus on Jewish women's own literary productions. Articles are arranged according to a chronology of topics; that is, the first essay analyzes images of women in medieval Hebrew literature, and the final four focus on Jewish women who are still writing today. Most of the remaining eleven articles focus on nineteenth- and earlier twentieth-century authors and texts. Five of the essays, including Shmuel Niger's 1919 "Yiddish Literature and the Female Reader," were published previously.

Baskin explains in her introduction that she envisioned the collection as a companion study to her 1991 anthology, *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*. The essays in *Women of the Word* complement the earlier anthology by "fill[ing] in certain significant gaps" on Eastern European, Israeli, and Latin American Jewish women. While the thematic link among the essays in *Women of the Word* is Jewish women and words, Baskin reminds us that words have his-

torical reality and that literary texts have historical functions. She also reminds us that the volume is not meant to be exhaustive but rather a survey of representative genres, writers, and languages.

My largest apprehension about *Women of the Word* revolves around the question, who is the intended audience? On the one hand, Baskin's introduction seems appropriate for general readers, but the essays themselves seem too specialized for such readers. On the other hand, the essays would be useful to Women's Studies scholars, but the introduction assumes readers' ignorance of feminist literary criticism. For example, Baskin explains "the two predominant theoretical approaches" of this criticism: images of women in literary texts, and women as producers of texts (p. 20). Baskin implies that this way of examining literary texts is universal, which it is not; it describes feminist work in the United States. She also explains the approach as if it were a new theory when it actually developed more than twenty years ago, and since its earliest articulations has become richer as a result of questions posed by psychoanalysts, Marxists, post-structuralists, post-colonialists, cultural critics, etc. Perhaps the target audience is Jewish Studies' scholars who are new to Women's Studies. But I must quickly add that I, not new to feminist textual work, also learned as I read. As someone who studies U.S. Jewish women, the essays on medieval Hebrew texts, and on Italian Renaissance, Israeli, Latin American, and Yiddish women "filled in gaps" in my own knowledge.

I believe that Baskin places the collection in Jewish Women's Studies when she claims, "The essays ... are part of a nascent but dynamic effort to listen" to Jewish women's voices (p. 32), voices which have been silenced "in a traditional Jewish culture that most often denied women the education and the empowerment requisite for recording their thoughts and feelings" (p. 19). Despite the limitations imposed on them, Jewish women have devised "strategies for constructing intellectual and emotional identities amidst the competing demands of traditional norms, familial obligations, and economic survival" (p. 19).

The contours of *Women of the Word* can best be appreciated through a description and comparison of two of the essays, "Memory and Testimony of Women Survivors of Nazi Genocide," by Sara Horowitz, and "Looking at Yezierska" by Laura Wexler. Horowitz

provides an insightful meta-analysis of the existing research on the Holocaust, proposing that that research either asserts the "equality of men and women" — as victims, resistance fighters, sufferers, and survivors — or distinguishes "women's lives and deaths from those of men" (p. 264). This bifurcated approach, Horowitz contends, erases real women's diverse experiences. Further, it tends to compel scholars to see only two different narratives: "those of atrocity," where "pregnancy and motherhood render women especially vulnerable to Nazi brutality," and "those of heroism," in which "the same representations provide an arena for resistance against genocide" (p. 269). Horowitz not only points out what is wrong with these approaches, she offers a new way of reading the women's stories: by beginning with and listening to the tellers' own words rather than studying the narratives within a previously established framework of "atrocity or heroism." Horowitz focuses on "the word" through an analysis of the ways in which "women both experience and think through the complexities of memory, testimony, and survival" (p. 258). She elaborates: "The shifting voice of eyewitness, historian, imaginative narrator, and victim raises questions of perspective, memory, and experience" (p. 261).

Wexler offers a fresh perspective on "seeing" Anzia Yezierska, by scrutinizing two photographs of Yezierska and by rereading *Bread Givers* not as the more familiar ethnic, "representative" autobiography but as indicative of the author's "struggle with formalities" (p. 160) and the "impossibility for the working class or the racial 'other' to follow the codes of propriety and still be able to speak the truth" (p. 160). Wexler seeks to liberate Yezierska from the restraints of the "sentimental category of working class immigrant women's writer" (p. 157) as well as to calculate her location in the "literary life of the nation" (p. 153).

Anthologies invite contributors to talk to one another (sometimes explicitly). While nothing in either Horowitz's or Wexler's essay specifically suggests it is in dialogue with the other, I can "hear" a conversation because of the proximity of the two within the bound context of *Women of the Word*. In discussing the function of memory in texts by Jewish women, for example, Horowitz and Wexler might be asking each other the following questions: How does an author such as Yezierska, whose novel's plot parallels her

life's outline, use memory? Does that author want her novel (*Bread Givers*) to function as testimony? And what do these first-person narratives reveal about the construction of Jewish female selves?

A reader can combine two or more articles in *Women of the Word* and listen in on an implied conversation between or among them. This is one of the collection's strengths, especially fascinating given the vast chronological and geographic areas surveyed. As is the case with any anthology, readers will find particular entries more or less interesting. Some authors approach texts with more sophisticated theoretical apparatuses, and some construct more precisely articulated presentations. But as a whole, *Women of the Word* encourages new ways of reading the words about and by Jewish women at the same time that it supplies exciting information and original texts by Jewish women.

Follow My Footprints is a "reader," designed, as Sylvia Fishman implies in her preface, to be used in college courses. In addition to short stories and excerpts from novels, the collection includes an extended introduction as well as a glossary and "Suggestions for Further Reading." In the preface, Fishman explains that the collection should function as "a literary social history," to capture and convey "the sweep of the historical, social, economic, and cultural trends that have shaped modern Jewish life in general and the experiences of Jewish women in particular" (p. xiv). So, reading the fiction included in *Follow My Footprints* will enable a reader to understand "changes in the lives of American Jewish women ... transformations of the American Jewish family and the ... conflict between traditional Jewish values and the American secular/Christian environment" (p. xiv).

In "The Faces of Women: An Introductory Essay," Fishman provides a chronological survey of the origins of images about Jewish women. The survey begins with the Bible and the "interpretive communities" of rabbis formulating the Talmud and post-talmudic commentaries, and proceeds to summaries of Eastern European Jewish life, Yiddish literature, modern Jewish literature, and Jewish immigrants in the United States. Fishman frames this chronology in the hypothesis that Jewish literature has ambivalently portrayed strong women.

Like the introduction, the short stories and novel excerpts are

also effectively arranged both chronologically and thematically. Sections include "The Eastern European Milieu: Toward a Feminist Sensibility" (I. L. Peretz, Sholem Aleichem, Sholem Asch, Chaim Grade, Isaac Bashevis Singer); "Dislocation and Survival in Immigrant America" (Abraham Cahan, Anzia Yezierska, Henry Roth, Tillie Olsen); "The Evolution of Literary Types: The 'Jewish Mother' and the 'Jewish American Princess'" (Herman Wouk, Philip Roth); "Real Women: Jewish Mothers and Daughters Explore New Paths" (Bernard Malamud, Seymour Epstein, Grace Paley, Vivian Gornick, Anne Richardson Roiphe); and finally "Contemporary Soldier Women in a Changing World" (Gloria Goldreich, Ruth Knafo Setton, Gloria Kirchheimer, Rebecca Goldstein, Cynthia Ozick).

In generalizing about the fiction in this collection, Fishman concludes that the American Jewish woman has been traditionally portrayed in "two basic stock characters: the 'Jewish mother' and the 'Jewish American princess.'" While the former, in the guise of the "overbearing Jewish matron," had appeared in European Yiddish literature, that figure was not attacked by authors; instead, the targets were the "ineffectual husbands who created the necessity for their wives' forcefulness" (p. 31). In the United States, that Jewish matron evolved into the "aggressive, verbal, clever Jewish woman" who "was often caricatured as pushy and unattractive compared to the refined, polite, domestic, docile, and ornamental image of the 'real' American non-Jewish woman" (p. 31).

I raise two serious concerns about the anthology. My first is that it perpetuates a preconception that Jewish American literature commences with the immigration of Eastern European Jews in the final decades of the nineteenth century. In light of Fishman's claim that *Follow My Footprints* provides a "social history" of Jews in the United States, I think it would have been appropriate to include fiction about and by Jewish women before the twentieth century. That fiction does exist—by Rebekah Hyneman and Emma Lazarus, to cite just two examples. A more accurate subtitle for this collection would be: "Changing Images of Eastern European Jewish Women in Twentieth-Century American Jewish Fiction."

My second concern is with the silence about the process by which the fiction was selected. In the preface, Fishman says simply that she included fiction that has "proved most effective" in describing

the literary social history of U.S. Jewish women. I wish Fishman had explained what made a particular author, one specific short story, or a circumscribed ten pages from a novel "most effective." Without such an explanation, I am left wondering whether Fishman constructed categories around the fiction or found fiction which conformed to preexisting classifications. (I note two additional problems: the brief introductions to each selection do not include the original publication dates, and in the case of excerpts, do not provide the title of the novel. Although this information does appear in some form in the Acknowledgments, it would be more useful immediately preceding the excerpts.)

Throughout her introduction, Fishman conveys fairly basic information: a definition of a minyan, explanation of the fact that in "many traditional Jewish societies" women were required to sit behind the *mekhitzah*, etc. She also reviews the outlines of the history of Jewish migration to the United States, and the glossary includes such words as "Ashkenazi" and "Yeshiva" as well as Yiddish words: *Kayn anyhoreh* and *Shadchen*, for example. All of this suggests to me that Fishman had in mind a general audience, including college students, and that the purpose of this collection is to instruct such readers about Jewish American culture as it is embodied in literary texts. But this does not imply that readers already familiar with American Jewish literature will find *Follow My Footsteps* tedious. On the contrary, Fishman's design, of tracing the development over time of particular literary "types," creates a dramatic "literary social history" of U.S. Jewish women.

Both Fishman's and Baskin's anthologies "demonstrate the ways in which literature tells us about women's lives in particular circumstances" (Baskin, p. 19). Although neither collection takes advantage of the theories proposed by cultural critics, post-colonialists, or new historicists, they do begin the process of challenging artificial and arbitrary distinctions between disciplines. Jewish Women's Studies also implicitly challenges those distinctions. As a multidisciplinary field, incorporating the work of sociologists, historians, literary critics, theologians, and artists, it provides new fusions, new connections, and new questions.¹

—Diane Lichtenstein

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Note

1. I thank Steven Diamond, Kathleen Greene, Donna Oliver, and Cynthia Reich for responding to a draft of this review.

Chanes, Jerome R., Edited by.
*Antisemitism in America Today:
Outspoken Experts Explode the Myths.*
New York: Birch Lane Press, 1995. xvi, 480 pp.

In this fine collection of essays, an impressive group of academics, Jewish communal leaders involved in intergroup relations, and popular writers try to put anti-Semitism in the United States in some perspective. The editor, who has chosen his contributors wisely, argues that anti-Semitism is now at its lowest point in American history—neither virulent nor growing—yet many American Jews are not comfortable with this answer. Other authors essentially say the same thing. Earl Raab, a community relations pioneer and a prominent observer of the Jewish scene in the United States for the past fifty years, writes, "It is startling to note the extent to which attitudes of prejudice have declined in America in the last half century" (p. 88); Professor Barry Rubin of Hebrew University in Jerusalem begins his essay with these sentences: "The starting point for any honest discussion of antisemitism today is the phenomenon's unimportance. Never before, at least since the time Christianity seized power over the Roman Empire, has anti-semitism been less significant than at present" (p. 120); while A. James Rudin, director of the American Jewish Committee's interreligious affairs division, notes that "there has been more progress in Christian-Jewish relations over the past twenty years than in the previous two thousand" (p. 218). And Arthur Hertzberg, who agrees that anti-Semitism is less of a threat to Americans than in the past, points out that while 75 percent of Jews think anti-Semitism in the United States is a serious threat, 90 percent of Gentiles believe it is "residual and vanishing."

With so many sophisticated and knowledgeable individuals arguing that anti-Semitism in the United States has declined, how can we account for the fact that a huge majority of Gentiles agree with them but an overwhelming number of Jews disagree? My own opinion is that while many Jews are on the mailing lists of the Anti-Defamation League and the Simon Wiesenthal Center, fewer Gentiles

are, and therefore they get less information about the anti-Semitism that does exist. Furthermore, while Jews have a sensitive antenna for anything that smacks of anti-Semitism, others give less thought to the subject. Measuring the degree of anti-Semitism in the United States is problematic; non-Jews, when asked about the subject, are probably reacting to their own attitudes and experiences; Jews seem to be responding, I believe, more to the odd incident and to the expressions of fringe elements in society.

To be sure, anyone who lived through the Holocaust, or remembers Hitler, will argue that the Nazi dictator himself started as part of a fringe group and ultimately gained control not only of Germany but most of Europe as well. True, but the United States is not Germany, multiculturalism is part of the American creed and history, and the anti-Semitic heritage is much weaker here. Whereas European political leaders and parties often found it advantageous to join with anti-Semites, responsible American political parties and politicians shun outspoken bigots. The anti-Semites in our midst, and Father Charles Coughlin was probably the most prominent and notorious one during his heyday (1938–1942), have never received majority support, nor have they won acceptance as leaders from their parties.

Nevertheless, the question remains, why do American Jews think anti-Semitism is on the rise? As several of the writers point out, many Jews confuse incidents with attitudes. While anti-Semitic attitudes have declined greatly in this country, the number of recorded anti-Semitic incidents has increased. Moreover, a number of Jewish defense organizations publicize these incidents, reporters for the media highlight them, and fear spreads through the Jewish community. Most Jews have heard of Pat Buchanan, David Duke, and Louis Farrakhan. Fewer can explain what the JAP incidents were or why they created community hysteria. Many of the readers of this review may already have forgotten the numerous articles on the baiting of “Jewish American Princesses” and the college campuses where they occurred in the late 1980s.

The editor’s goal is to synthesize our knowledge, and, in some cases, eliminate our ignorance, of anti-Semitism in America in 1993–94, when the collection was put together. He has divided the essays into five sections: Introduction; Perspectives; Manifestations

of Anti-Semitism: Assessments and Evaluations; Issues in Anti-Semitism; and Anti-Semitism in Popular Culture. Most of the essays are well written, well worth reading, and likely to lead to contemplation and discussion. Among those particularly impressive, aside from the ones previously mentioned, are Martin S. Bergmann's "Antisemitism and the Psychology of Prejudice," in which the author explains how racist individuals have weak egos, are excessively hostile, and project their own hostility and aggression onto the groups and individuals whom they condemn; Kenneth Stern's "Denial of the Holocaust: An Antisemitic Political Assault," which reminds us that "Holocaust denial is no more about the Holocaust than the medieval claim that Jews poisoned wells was about water quality" (p. 243); and Letty Pogrebin's "Women and Antisemitism," which delineates the intensity, rather than the casualness, of anti-Semitism in the so-called JAP jokes.

The one area of contemporary anti-Semitism which I think has been handled too gingerly in this book is black anti-Semitism. It is there, it has been there for generations, and every poll, dating back to Gary Marx's *Protest and Prejudice* (1967), has shown that anti-Semitism is strong in the African-American community (even at the time of publication Marx's data were misinterpreted). To say, as both the editor and other authors indicate, that we do not know enough about the attitudes of blacks toward Jews is ingenuous. From literature, from history, and from Geraldine Rosenfield's marvelous article, "The Polls: Attitudes Toward American Jews" (*Public Opinion Quarterly*, Fall 1982), we know that black animosity toward Jews is greater than that of most whites. Maybe, from a public relations standpoint, this is not a good thing to say; for the sake of historical accuracy, however, it must be acknowledged.

But this caveat aside, the collection is worth the attention of interested readers. Pat Buchanan and David Duke may be long gone from the news when this review is printed, but individuals like them crop up periodically, and their behavior suggests a severity of prejudice in this country that exists among only a minority of other Americans. As this collection shows, and as my own research indicates, anti-Semitism in the United States exists but is less intense than in the past; it is not currently a reflection of the views of the majority of non-Jews. There will always be kooks, crackpots, and

bigots. It is extremely unlikely, however, that the speeches or activities of any of them will undermine Jewish security in the United States. A reading of this collection will confirm my analysis.

— Leonard Dinnerstein

Leonard Dinnerstein is director of Judaic Studies and professor of history at the University of Arizona. His publications include The Leo Frank Case, America and the Survivors of the Holocaust, and Antisemitism in America.

Silverstein, Alan.

Alternatives to Assimilation:

The Response of Reform Judaism to American Culture, 1840–1930.

Hanover, N.H.: Brandeis University Press, 1994. x, 275 pp.

Commitment to *ahavath yisrael* (love of Jewry) is an ideal to which American Jews have had trouble being faithful, since the claims of citizenship and the national promise of open opportunity have made monogamy virtually impossible to practice. The primacy of the rather vague ideology known as Americanism (a term that Jefferson apparently coined) has long threatened to cripple Judaism so effectively that an ancient tradition has constantly been obliged to transform itself. Only institutional adaptation might retain the allegiance of the descendants of those whose deity had brought them out of the land of Egypt. Of the three major denominations, Reform Judaism has been most susceptible to the perils of assimilation, to losing its members to the allure of a democratic and individualistic society; and therefore to study how Reform learned to roll with the punch can reveal how a religious movement has sustained itself for what is by now roughly a century and a half of tumultuous change.

The resilience of Reform Judaism is indeed the theme of Alan Silverstein's elegantly designed and conscientiously researched account of nine decades of institutional flexibility. In *The Americanization of the Synagogue, 1820–1870* (1976), Leon A. Jick entwined the fate of Reform with its adherents' yearnings for upward mobility and national integration. In *Response to Modernity* (1988), Michael A. Meyer displayed special sensitivity to the transmission and evolution of religious ideas within a transatlantic context. Silverstein shows how a movement that was the lengthened shadow of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise bent in order not to break.

In 1840 the scattered, tiny, and autonomous Jewish congregations of Jacksonian America were little more than burial societies that occupied buildings where prayers were uttered, though very rarely by rabbis (who, if they existed, were unaccredited and foreign-born). No wonder then that the first rabbi to brandish formal training, Abraham Rice, immigrated to Baltimore to "dwell in complete dark-

ness, without a teacher or a companion....The religious life [of Jewry] in this land is on the lowest level, most people eat foul food and desecrate the Sabbath in public," he complained in 1849. "Under these circumstances ... I wonder whether it is even permissible for a Jew to live in this land" (quoted on p. 2). Coordination among the institutions of Jewish life was limited, and the transmission of Judaic knowledge to the young was spasmodic and barely effectual.

But by 1930, when Silverstein's monograph comes to an end, the now-familiar features of Reform Jewish life were locked in place: synagogues that provided a diverse range of activities for adults and children alike, worship services conducted by rabbis who were professionally trained and were attuned to the nuances of American culture, and religious schools organized around curricula which had been centrally developed and nationally propagated. Already in the nineteenth century, congregations and the rabbinate had banded together to form national organizations: the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

The proof of the Reformers' success was not only that they had managed to attract a substantial proportion of second-generation Americans from Eastern Europe but also that both the Orthodox and Conservative wings of Judaism found it necessary to imitate much of the institutional pattern that Cincinnati had pioneered. *Alternatives to Assimilation* is therefore packaged to present a happy ending: rabbis and lay people had learned how to transfer the beliefs and practices that had emerged in German principalities after the Enlightenment to the conditions of a voluntaristic and ram-bunctious society.

In making his case for accommodation so convincing, the author has conducted extensive research in the records of four congregations and also offers a paradigm that is designed to elucidate the national experience—in effect—of three generations. The synagogues cover the compass: in the East, Keneseth Israel of Philadelphia; in the Midwest, Kehillah K'doshah B'nai Yeshurun of Cincinnati; in the West, Emanu-El of San Francisco; and in the South, Temple Sinai of New Orleans. Instead of differences, Silverstein notices similarities, which enable him to trace an historical pattern in which an Anglo-American model of federation is adopted (1840–1880), and then the German model becomes hegemonic (1880–1900). Finally, with the

transformation of the United States into a world power (and the delegitimation of the Kaiser's *Kultur* because of the Great War), an American pattern is discernible (1900–1930), as ethnic divisions between Jews from Western and Central Europe and those from Eastern Europe narrow. The movement has gained the traction to survive on native grounds.

Alternatives to Assimilation shows how American society compels (Reform) Judaism to reconfigure itself—how a synagogue becomes a temple which becomes a center in which secular activities are also conducted, how a rabbi ceases to be a legal scholar authorized to adjudicate disputes and becomes a pastor and a formally educated professional and an organization man and a fund-raiser and an emissary to the Gentiles. (Silverstein also reveals how well-compensated such varied duties could be. To cite an extreme case, while the 1900 census revealed that the average Protestant minister was earning \$731 per annum, Sinai Temple in Chicago was paying Emil Hirsch over \$12,000.) The mandates of sisterhoods and brotherhoods also get altered, from social service in the slums to all sorts of enhancements for participation in synagogue life itself. The “rule of thumb” that so often defined the pedagogy of the *melamed* is shown yielding to a bureaucracy that develops textbooks and other educational materials, and devises and revises prayer books as well. All such activities are shown to be in response to particular historical needs, above all an effort to resolve the recurrent problem of retaining the interest and membership of the young. Though Silverstein's own doctorate was earned at the Jewish Theological Seminary rather than in, say, a university's department of history, he is expansive in delineating the context of the American past within which to place the transformations of Reform Judaism, and shows how faithfully it mirrors the evolution of Protestantism.

Though the author insists that “these comparisons and similarities do not imply that Reform leaders were constantly imitating American Protestants, but rather that both Christians and Jews in the United States adopted parallel techniques well suited to the American environment” (p. 207), his own account discloses the frequency with which the Reform movement picked up particular cues from neighboring sects (perhaps the Methodists most of all). Readers of *Alternatives to Assimilation* might easily infer that Reform rabbis—

from Wise himself down to the obscure but influential George Zepin (who applied Frederick W. Taylor's ideas of managerial expertise to make the UAHC efficient) — did not react to the American environment in some direct fashion. Instead that milieu was confronted quite often through the innovative mediation of Protestants. With their hundreds of sects and often with their missionary and evangelical zeal, they were competing even more fiercely than Jews in the marketplace for souls; and with secularism so ascendant, no minister, regardless of particular creed, could be certain of avoiding the fate of the Beatles' Father McKenzie, "writing the words of a sermon that no one will hear." Silverstein's book demonstrates how fully Reform felt obliged to operate in such a cultural climate — and how deftly liberal Judaism managed to do so. Even when it had to draw back and sanction a partial return to ritual ("we have Protestantized enough," one rabbi announced at a CCAR convention in 1920), Silverstein notes that Protestant revivalism was concurrently engaged in its own version of *teshuvah*.

I nevertheless find something a little askew in this portrait of Reform as mostly a bundle of reactions to the stimulus of American conditions, as an imitation of the procedures and values that Protestant denominations were already implementing. While Silverstein persuasively documents how frequently the response to particular historical challenges consisted of emulating Christian success in addressing the consequences of secularism, the trickier question to answer is how, despite all the extreme measures of adaptation, Reform could still preserve its own identity over time. This movement did not become indistinguishable from the Unitarianism that Jefferson had predicted would "become the general religion of the United States."

Reform Judaism might well oscillate from ritual to reason and back again, might sanction the piety most congenial to German-speaking Jews and then mobilize its biggest constituency among the progeny of the Yiddish-speaking Jews from the Pale of Settlement, might veer from virulent anti-Zionism to ardent support of the State of Israel. But Reform remained recognizable and continuous in ways that cry out for an analysis of its ideological dimension, its inner dynamic. Its capacity to be true to itself is a phenomenon which *Alternatives to Assimilation* neglects. Plasticity

does not explain enough. In the nine decades that the book so effectively covers, Reform made itself into a version of Judaism that kept coming back by popular demand, and that must have offered something more coherent and intelligible than an eerily sensitive, interlocking set of institutions to be decisively shaped by Protestant pressure and the American ambience.

– Stephen Whitfield

Stephen J. Whitfield teaches in the American Studies department at Brandeis University. His many distinguished publications have focused on American intellectual and social history as well as on the Southern Jewish experience.

1995 *Selected Acquisitions*

Congregational and Community Records and Histories

Cincinnati, Ohio—Beth Adam (Cincinnati Congregation for Humanistic Judaism)
Records and correspondence concerning Beth Adam's application for membership in the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1990–1992; *Typescript*

(Received from Robert B. Barr, Cincinnati)

Gevirtz, Marianne L. "The Struggle for Civic and Economic Rights of the Jews in New Netherland, 1654–1664," term paper submitted to Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1995; *Typescript; Xerox copy*

(Received from Jacob R. Marcus, Cincinnati)

Goldstein, Ari. "The Jews of Mississippi: Why Have They Fled?" term paper submitted to Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1995; *Typescript; Xerox copy*

(Received from Jacob R. Marcus, Cincinnati)

Mississippi. Records of Jewish communities in Mississippi, including genealogies, photographs, oral histories, community histories, and biographical information; compiled by Leo and Evelyn Turitz during research for their book, *Jews in Early Mississippi*, 1995; *Manuscript, Tape Recordings, and Photographs*

(Received from Leo and Evelyn Turitz, Laguna Hills, Cal.)

St. Thomas. Records of the Hebrew Congregation, including marriage and other life cycle records, 1786–1969; *Manuscript and Typescript; Microfilm*

(Received from Clementine L. Kaufman, Baltimore, Md.)

Youngstown, Ohio. "The History of the Jews of Greater Youngstown, Ohio, 1865–1990," 1994; *Printed*

(Received from Bruce Elder, Cincinnati)

Records and Papers of Societies and Institutions

Los Angeles, California-Jewish Free Loan Association. Minutes, Dec. 1903 - Feb. 1910; *Manuscript; Yiddish; Xerox Copy*

(Received from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion)

Letters and Papers

Blum, Hyman. Ledger listing lands held by the Leon and H. Blum Land Company, 1880, with a letter from Mrs. James H. Becker containing background informa-

tion; *Printed*

(Received from Mrs. James H. Becker, Highland Park, Ill.)

Harrison, Benjamin. Letter to Henry Mack, Nov. 16, 1888; *Manuscript and Typescript*

(Received from Mrs. Ira D. Falkenstein, Cincinnati)

Moses, Raphael J. Letter from Robert E. Lee concerning voting and elections in the post-Civil War South, April 3, 1867; *Manuscript and Typescript; Xerox copy*

(Received from Melvin A. Young, Chattanooga, Tenn.)

Schulzinger, Morris S. Papers and documents reflecting his involvement in many Jewish philanthropic and cultural organizations, 1945-1955; *Manuscript and Typescript; Xerox copy*

(Received from Judy Lucas, Cincinnati)

Schwartz, William S. Letter written while in France during World War II detailing a Yom Kippur service and conditions there during the war, Oct. 1, 1944; *Typescript Xerox copy*

(Received from Theodore L. Schwartz, Cincinnati)

Simson, Nathan. Transcriptions of two letters from Nehemiah Marks to Simson, 1721; *Manuscript and Typescript*

(Received from Irwin J. Miller, Stamford, Conn.)

Taft, William H. Letter to Alfred Mack, July 19, 1921; *Manuscript and Typescript*

(Received from Mrs. Ira D. Falkenstein)

Tepfer, John J. Letters from Samuel M. Blumenfield and Chaim Tchernowitz, 1926 and 1943; *Manuscript and Typescript; English and Hebrew; Xerox copy*

(Received from Paul M. Steinberg, New York, N.Y.)

Autobiographies, Biographies, Diaries, and Memoirs

Adler, Joseph T. "The Family of Joseph and Marie Adler: Jews in Germany, German Jews in America," a family history and memoir of their lives in Germany and immigration to the United States during the Nazi period, 1992; *Typescript; Xerox copy*

(Received from Joseph T. Adler, Detroit, Mich.)

Bluming, H. Charles. "Jew Boy in Goy Town: A Catskill Mountain Odyssey," a memoir of growing up in the Catskill mountains, 1994; *Typescript*

(Received from Avrum Z. Bluming, Encino, Cal.)

De Forest, John L. "My Hours With Sholem Asch," a memoir of his relationship with Asch; and "Our Neighbor Benny Goodman," a manuscript of diary excerpts covering the years, 1949-1986; *Typescript; Xerox copy*

(Received from John L. De Forest, Stamford, Conn.)

Glickman, Brenner J. Term paper on his great-grandfather, Joseph Brenner of Portland, Maine, submitted to Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1995; *Typescript*; *Xerox copy*

(Received from Jacob R. Marcus, Cincinnati)

Liebman, Joshua L. Diary of a trip to Europe and Palestine, August–November, 1930; *Manuscript*

(Received from Susan Avjian, Gaithersburg, Md.)

Ratner, Abraham. "Journey to the City: An Immigrant's Experience," a memoir of his life in the Ukraine and the United States, edited by Marc L. Ratner, n.d.; *Typescript*; *Xerox copy*

(Received from Marc L. Ratner, Walnut Creek, Cal.)

Genealogies

Ezekiel, Jacob. Descendants of Ezekiel, compiled by Claire Rosenbaum, 1995; *Printed*

(Received from Saul Viener, Richmond, Va.)

Natelson, Stephen E. "Dis Ganze Mishpoche," a history and genealogy of the Natelson family, 1995; *Printed*

(Received from Stephen F. Natelson, Knoxville, Tenn.)

Olitzky Family. Family records and documents for the Olitzky/Reznick families, 1914–1994; *Manuscript* and *Typescript*

(Received from A. N. Olitzky, St. Petersburg, Fla.)

Oral History

Heymont, Irving. Oral history testimony describing the Landsberg displaced persons camp, 1995; *Video Tape*

(Received from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.)

Klausner, Abraham J. Video and audio recordings of Klausner's talk at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, "Jews Behind Barbed Wire: My Struggle on Behalf of Holocaust Survivors in Germany, 1945–1946," 1995; *Video Tape* and *Tape Recording*

(Received from Abraham J. Peck, Cincinnati)

Theses

Malone, Barbara S. "Standing 'Unswayed in the Storm': Rabbi Max Heller, Reform

and Zionism in the American South, 1860–1929,” Ph.D. dissertation submitted to Tulane University, 1994; *Typescript*

(Received from Barbara S. Malone, New Orleans, La.)

Miscellaneous

Cohen, Norman M. Series of lectures on the Midrash, n.d.; *Tape Recording*

(Received from Richard B. Safran, Fort Wayne, Ind.)

Gilbert, Martin. Lecture at the University of Hartford on “The Jewish Dimension in 20th Century History,” 1995; *Video Tape*

(Received from Mel Yoken, New Bedford, Mass.)

Goldman, Solomon. A reading from the preface of *The Book of Books*, n.d.; and lecture on “Does God Speak to Man?,” 1948; *Tape Recording*

(Received from Elliot B. Gertel, Chicago, Ill.)

Postman, Neil. “Religious Values in an Age of Technology,” an address given at a meeting of the Skirball Institute of American Values, sponsored by the American Jewish Committee, 1995; *Tape Recording*

(Received from Alfred Wolf, Los Angeles)

Dear Readers,

For a biography of Nelson Glueck well underway, I am seeking personal correspondence from Dr. Glueck, or anecdotes regarding shared experience. Copies of written material can be mailed to me at **1642 Woodledge Cir., State College, PA 16803** or faxed to me at **(814) 861-3153**. You can also reach me on the internet at **rabbijon@aol.com**.

All submissions gratefully acknowledged.

Rabbi Jonathan Brown

