ARTICLE

Anshe Sfard: The Creation of the First Hasidic Congregations in North America[1]

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The documents do not speak unless someone asks them to verify, that is, to make true, some hypothesis.
– Antoine Prost[2]

I. The "Absence" of Prewar North American Hasidism

Hasidim are very much a presence in the large urban communities of North American Jewry today. Numerous scholarly studies, mostly sociological and anthropological in nature, examine the Hasidic phenomenon in North America.[3] Most of these studies, however, pay scant attention to Hasidism in North America prior to World War II, when a number of Hasidic spiritual leaders of the first rank, such as Rabbi Joseph Isaac Schneersohn, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, arrived as refugees from Europe.[4] Hasidic life in North America prior to 1940 is still very much a terra incognita.[5] We need to ask ourselves, "Why is this?" It is well understood that the great eastern European Jewish migration to North America, among other places, came from all areas of eastern Europe, including those in which Hasidism was the dominant Judaic religious expression. While it is clear that some Jewish emigrants from Hasidic-dominated areas had decisively broken with the Hasidic tradition while still in Europe and others did so after their emigration, there still remained large numbers who retained an attachment to traditional *Yiddishkeit* as understood and practiced in their hometowns. Logically, this would mean that Jews from Hasidic backgrounds would seek to found synagogues in North America in which their Jewish experiences in Europe would resonate. Yet the scholarly consensus seems to be that the Hasidic emigrants were less successful at doing so than their non-Hasidic contemporaries. Thus, Lloyd Gartner stated, "Hasidim emigrated to the U.S. within the great migration of 1880–1925, where they generally formed part of the larger body of pious immigrant Jews, while frequently forming *shtiblekh* of their own. They seem to have been less successful than non-Hasidic immigrant Jews in transmitting their style of religious life to the next generation, because apart from their *zaddikim*, who had remained in Europe, they apparently felt a fatalistic impotence to perpetuate the Judaism they knew."[6]

This article will be, in essence, an inquiry into the validity of Gartner's surmise. In the last few decades, the study of eastern European immigrant

Orthodox Judaism in North America has significantly progressed, with much of the attention going to studies on the immigrant Orthodox rabbinate.[7] However, this scholarship has not yet paid sufficient attention to the special circumstances of the Hasidic stream of immigration. The general scholarly understanding is that the thousands of congregations founded by Jews of the immigrant generation were overwhelmingly Orthodox in nature and that immigrant Orthodoxy was largely transient in nature, often not sustained much beyond the immigrant generation. This consensus will not be challenged here. However, this article will take a closer look at the Hasidic phenomenon in North America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Before we can begin doing so, however, we must pay some attention to why pre-World War II Hasidic immigration to North America made such little impression on the scholars studying North American Jewry in that era. One of the reasons may, perhaps, stem from the fact that until recently, Hasidim, with the partial exception of Chabad,[8] tended not to record their history,[9] whereas those Jews who had consciously broken with Jewish Orthodoxy often understood the historical nature of their endeavors and recorded them in memoirs and narratives.[10]

Many of the Jews who had consciously broken with their Judaic past also understood themselves to be engaged in a struggle with Orthodoxy in general, and with Hasidism in particular, for the very definition of what *Yiddishkeit* would mean to the next generation. Thus, in Europe, leading figures of secular *Yiddishism*, such as Yehuda Leib Peretz, tried to portray their own version of "Hasidism,"[11] and still others, such as Mendele Mokher Sforim, desired to excise Hasidism from the landscape of the eastern European shtetl. In the words of critic Dan Miron, "[Mendele's] novels have almost nothing to say about Hasidism and the Hasidic way of life, in spite of the fact that the Ukrainian shtetl society upon which the writer focused was largely dominated by Hasidism."[12] Furthermore, Hasidism as a movement found itself the target of the extreme opprobrium of numerous nineteenth- and early twentieth century critics, both Jewish and non-Jewish, for whom Hasidism symbolized all that was wrong with eastern European Judaism.[13] The young historian Simon Dubnow summed up the turn of the twentieth century scholarly view of the movement when he wrote in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*:

> Hasidism is so deeply grounded in Russo-Polish Judaism that it has proved impossible to uproot it. It still has its hundreds of thousands of adherents; and, although its development has been temporarily arrested, its vitality can not be doubted. Started as a counterpoise to rabbinical and ritual formalism, it still satisfies the religious requirements of the uneducated masses. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, owing to a general social reaction in the life of the Russian Jews, a measure of revival was noticed in Hasidic circles… Though not producing at present any prominent personalities in

> literature or in communal life, Hasidism nourishes itself by its stored-up reserves of spiritual power. In the eighteenth century it was a great creative force which brought into stagnant rabbinical Judaism a fervent stream of religious enthusiasm. Under the influence of Hasidism the Russo-Polish Jew became brighter at heart but darker in intellect. In the nineteenth century, in its contact with European culture, it was more reactionary than rabbinism. The period of stagnation which it has lately passed through must, however, result in its gradual decay.[14]

It is worth noting several items in Dubnow's description, which tellingly reflected and informed both the scholarly and the popular opinion of Hasidism in the era we are examining: (1) its followers are the "uneducated masses,"[15] (2) it is described intellectually as "dark" and "reactionary," (3) in its present "period of stagnation," it is sustained by "its stored-up reserves of spiritual power," but it is fated to gradually decay.

Given this evaluation, it is no surprise at all that both European and North American observers expressed horror at the thought that Hasidism might actually come to America. Thus, when, in 1873, news arrived in Europe that a group of Hasidim had founded a synagogue in Chicago, the *Israelitische Wochenschrift* of Magdeburg carried the following:

> A Polish synagogue is to be inaugurated. The detailed description lets [us] know that we have to do with a group of Hasidim. It is to be regretted that such scenes should be taking place in America.[16]

In North America itself, another Hasidic congregation, founded in Montreal in 1884, elicited negative comment from an observer who expressed the fear that "the malignant leprosy of *Hasidut* will spread on the soil of this land."[17] The traditionalist-oriented *The American Hebrew*, in response to a letter to the editor defending the conduct of a Hasidic rabbi in New York in 1893, stated editorially,

> "We should all exert the fullest influence possible to discountenance the transplanting of this system to this country."[18]

II. Methodological Considerations

As we can see from this reaction, there were eastern European Jews in North America from the very beginnings of the mass migration who founded congregations that contemporary Jews understood as "Hasidic." But what does "Hasidic" actually mean in this context? One important factor to take into consideration is that the Hasidic spiritual leadership, particularly at the beginning of the migration, tended not to emigrate. Second, this leadership also tended to discourage its followers from emigration because they had grave doubts about

the viability of Jewish life in the New World (though this pessimism held true no less for the *Mitnagdim* than for the Hasidim).[19] Thus, for these Hasidic leaders, no less than for the detractors of Hasidism, North American Hasidic life had no "right" to exist.

Hasidism has indeed been classically defined as a leadership-centered movement. Was the Hasidic rank and file, however, merely an inert mass, taking its entire direction from its spiritual leadership? Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, in a recent article, has demonstrated the importance of understanding Hasidism from the perspective of the ordinary Hasidim, who often lived at a considerable distance from their leadership.[20] If we look primarily at the Hasidic congregations in North America and compare them to Hasidic institutions in Europe established at a distance from the Rebbe's court, we will perhaps arrive at a more balanced view of North American Hasidic life.[21]

What is our evidence for Hasidic life in North America during the mass migration era? It consists largely of the congregations that the immigrants founded and of the rabbis who attempted to provide spiritual leadership for the emigrants. Both of these areas need to be examined with great care. With respect to the synagogues, particularly, some scholars have almost reflexively referred to them as "copies" of the synagogues the immigrants experienced in their home communities.[22] A typical expression of this idea is where the worship in these synagogues has been described as "the meticulous preservation of the traditional Orthodox service."[23] More recent scholarship, however, recognizes that there were important differences between the two.[24] It can be readily conceded that the immigrants indeed attempted to "copy" the worship of their hometowns, as long as it is understood that these "copies" were recognizably different from the originals, if only because, as Moses Rischin points out, the synagogues that were created in New York's immigrant Jewish district often functioned as "many sided landsmanschafts, uniting the features of the Old World burial, study, and visitors-of-the-sick societies."[25]

When we examine these immigrant Hasidic congregations, we find two important factors worthy of our attention. The first is liturgy. One of the primary distinguishing factors of the Hasidic movement, from its eighteenth century origins, was its adoption of *Nusah Sfard*, a distinctive liturgy derived from, but not identical to, that of the Sephardic Jews.[26] But whereas in eastern Europe, Hasidic congregations were most often identified by the name of the movement or its spiritual leader, so that one referred to the "*Gerrer Shtibl*" of Warsaw, in North America Hasidic synagogues often found it necessary to identify themselves with the designation *Anshe Sfard* [Men of the *Sfard* liturgy]. *Sfard* in a number of variant spellings is present in a large proportion of congregational names. Sometimes it is alone, as in *Anshe Sfard*, while at other times it is combined with another title, such as *Agudath Achim Anshe Sfard.* That *Anshe Sfard* occurred in the names of many North American Hasidic congregations,

but not European congregations, lets us know that, in North America, a "code word" was often thought to be necessary.

With respect to the spiritual leadership of the congregations, it is reasonably clear that the majority of the pioneer eastern European immigrant Orthodox rabbis in North America were Lithuanian and hence non-Hasidic.[27] With some exceptions, such as Toronto,[28] rabbis from heavily Hasidic areas, such as Congress Poland, the Ukraine, and Galicia, came to North America relatively later. They often found difficulty in establishing themselves, particularly in the kosher meat industry, which alone afforded the earlier, non-Hasidic immigrant rabbis the opportunity to earn a decent living. In certain cases, the endemic rabbinical disputes encountered in city after city in this era in North America can be plotted according to Hasidic-*Mitnagdic* fault lines.[29]

A final methodological note is that any survey of North American Jewish life must include data both from New York, the largest and culturally most important North American Jewish community then and now, and what New Yorkers often call "out of town": the rest of North America.

III. Hasidic Synagogues

The researcher attempting to get a handle on the synagogues of New York in the prewar era must possess three important lists of congregations. The first was published in the *American Jewish Year Book*, Volume 2 (1900–1901), which lists community organizations, including synagogues, throughout the United States.[30] The second is the listing of congregations in the *Jewish Community Register* published by the New York Kehilla in 1918.[31] The third is a 1939 Works Progress Administration (WPA) survey of New York's Jewish houses of worship.[32]

For the synagogues surveyed, we generally possess the names, locations, dates of foundation, and other significant information. This allows us to attempt some preliminary generalizations about Hasidic/*Anshe Sfard* congregations in the five boroughs from the beginning of the twentieth century to the outbreak of World War II, understanding full well that the surveys cited were likely not complete and contain some errors.

What becomes immediately clear is that evidence of *Anshe Sfard* congregations is relatively small at the turn of the twentieth century and becomes considerably larger in subsequent decades. Thus, in the *American Jewish Year Book* survey, only three New York synagogues used *Sfard* in their names.[33] This may indicate that immigration of Hasidic-oriented Jews tended to be later in the wave of immigration and that, therefore, fewer congregations were founded before the early twentieth century. It may also indicate the marginality of many of the *Sfard* synagogues at the turn of the century, which allowed them to be overlooked by the survey.

The New York Kehilla survey, nearly two decades later, reveals a significantly better showing. Of the 784 congregations listed, thirty-four, or nearly 5 percent, have *Sfard* as part of their names, six have *Nusach Ari*, and another twenty-two advertise themselves as "Hasidic" in their names.[34]

In the WPA survey, some two decades later, the first thing to note is that fully 113 synagogues in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx[35] had *Sfard* as part of their name, while another sixteen advertised themselves as *Nusah Ari*.[36] This is a significant portion of the total number of 2,033 synagogues listed, slightly higher in percentage than the Kehilla survey. It is also clear that not every synagogue that prayed with a Hasidic liturgy felt the need to advertise *Nusah Sfard* in its name. For many, it was likely sufficient to advertise themselves by the name of a town in which Hasidic worship predominated to give potential worshippers the right idea.

Beyond the number of clearly *Nusah Sfard* congregations, it is important to note the smaller number of synagogues on the Kehilla and the WPA lists that clearly indicate their adherence to a particular Hasidic court. In this respect, they could be considered similar to the European Hasidic synagogues that functioned at a distance from the movement's center. Hasidic groups represented in 1930s New York included Karlin, Ger, Viznitz, Stolin, and Chabad. It is noteworthy that these synagogues, and others named from prominent Hasidic leaders such as Rabbi Hayyim Halberstam of Sanz, were not founded late in the immigration period. On the contrary, the synagogue of the Karlin Hasidim was founded on the Lower East Side as early as 1879 and apparently spawned a Karlin synagogue in Brooklyn, founded in 1912. Similarly, the Stolin Hasidim founded their synagogue in Manhattan in 1897, and a Stoliner synagogue opened in Brooklyn in 1924. The WPA survey thus indicates that, besides the *Anshe Sfard* synagogues, there were at least sixteen other synagogues whose names definitely indicate their Hasidic nature: eight in Manhattan, six in Brooklyn, and two in the Bronx. These synagogues, and others whose names do not allow such a close identification, presumably maintained close relations with European spiritual leaders through personal visits, letters, and telegrams.[37]

Any survey of Jewish communities outside New York City will find *Anshe Sfard* synagogues to be nearly ubiquitous. A general pattern, repeated in many communities, is that the first eastern European congregation to be founded is non-Hasidic, and then, as soon as the demographic growth of the immigrant Jewish community allowed, a *Sfard* congregation was founded. Thus, among larger communities in Philadelphia, the first eastern European congregation, B'nai Avraham, was founded in October 1882 and B'nai Jacob *Anshe Sfard* in 1883.[38] Toronto's *Mitnagdic* Goel Tzedek was followed in 1887 by the "Russian" [Ukrainian] and Galician Chevra Tehilim.[39] In Boston in the 1910s, two separate congregations were known simply as *Anshe Sfard*, and in the 1920s, there were three separate congregations with different addresses and no other

name.[40] In smaller communities such as Louisville, Kentucky, "A secession from Beth Israel of some Russian members in 1881 led to the establishment of the B'nai Jacob congregation… . The old B'rith Sholom synagogue, on First Street, near Walnut Street, has been acquired by the Anshei Sfard, most of whom are South-Russians, worshiping after the ritual of the Hasidim."[41]

It was clearly understood that the *Anshe Sfard* congregation was "worshiping after the ritual of the Hasidim."

IV. Hasidic Spiritual Leadership

As we have already indicated, however, "worshiping after the ritual of the Hasidim" constitutes only part of the Hasidic experience. The rest of the Hasidic experience depended greatly on the quantity and the quality of the spiritual leadership available. The consensus among contemporary observers of the North American Hasidic scene is that World War I marks something of a watershed. Prior to the war, there was little authentic Hasidic leadership in North America and certainly no Hasidic rabbis of the first rank. The relatively few Hasidic rabbis who did come to North America in the pre-World War I era were men with a claim to distinguished Hasidic descent (*einiklekh*) or nonestablished Hasidic leaders (*shtikl rebbes*) who had tried and failed to achieve satisfactory rabbinical positions in Europe.[42] In this situation, many *Anshe Sfard* congregations would not possess adequate Hasidic spiritual leadership. Such a situation may be reflected by one of these pioneer Hasidic rabbis, Yudel Rosenberg, who emigrated from Poland to Toronto in 1913. In the introduction to his book, *ha-Keriah ha-Kedosha*, which dealt with the laws relevant to public Torah reading in the synagogues, Rosenberg states that he wrote the book for congregations with no rabbis capable of interpreting the relevant laws.[43]

It is interesting to note in this connection that, in terms of rabbinical leadership, it should not be thought that the phenomenon of *einiklekh* leadership was unique to Hasidic life in North America. Until World War I, Hasidic rabbis generally resided in small towns, not in large cities like Warsaw, which had large Hasidic populations. Only rabbis of smaller reputation lived in large cities on a permanent basis.[44]

World War I and its aftermath, which brought unprecedented death and destruction to the Jews of eastern Europe that was overshadowed only by the immensity of the Holocaust, seems to have changed the minds of at least a portion of the Hasidic leadership with respect to urban living as well as emigration. Many Hasidic spiritual leaders had been displaced by the raging battles of the war to large cities, such as Warsaw and Vienna. It is significant that the story of the emigration to the United States of Rabbi Mordecai Shlomo Friedman, the Boyaner Rebbe, involved a wartime-induced stay in Vienna, as well as the encouragement of the Tchortkover Rebbe, who told Rabbi Friedman that in going to America, he would be able to accomplish something for *Yiddishkeit*.[45]

There is something of a consensus among early twentieth century observers of the Hasidic scene in North America that 1917 constituted a watershed year for American Hasidic life. Thus, the *New York Times* obituary of the prominent Brooklyn Hasidic rabbi, Vigdor Regenbogen, noted that, circa 1900 when Regenbogen came to New York, "there were very few Chasidim in America," whereas "since 1917 many Chasidic centres had sprung up here with the exodus from wartime eastern Europe."[46] Similarly, Sh. Erdberg, writing in 1927, understood that the "pioneer" *gute yidn* in America had arrived a decade previously.[47]

Beyond the ravages of World War I, the anti-Jewish pogroms in the Ukraine and the harsh repression of Judaism by the Soviet Union also helped induce a number of Hasidic rabbis to immigrate to North America.[48] Thus, Hasidic Rabbi Oshea Rabinowitz, in his first book published after his arrival in America, stated, "This my composition is dedicated… with thanks to God who brought me, my children, and my childrens' children from the vale of tears, from the field of slaughter, the land of Ukraine which is in Russia, the sinful country."[49]

Indeed, by the 1920s, a journalist writing in New York's *Jewish Day* could state that not a block in New York City does not contain a sign advertising the presence of a Hasidic rabbi, whether "true" (e.g., with the right family connections) or "false."[50] The ubiquity of Hasidic rabbis in New York is further attested in a 1944 article of Isaac Bashevis Singer in the *Forward*. As Singer stated, "Now New York is full of Rebbes, Rebbes' sons, grandsons. They conduct *tishn* in the [Lower] East Side, in Williamsburg, and in all areas of Brooklyn. They advertise in the *Morgn Zhurnal*."[51] The phenomenon of Hasidic rabbis coming to America to settle also inspired the satirical play *The Hasidic Rabbi*, performed by the Maurice Schwartz Troupe in 1928. The premise of the play was the incongruity of Hasidic rabbis in New York: "as grotesque an anachronism as a caravan of camels in a city of subways and motor cars."[52]

The number of Hasidic spiritual leaders who immigrated to North America in this era will probably never be known with great exactitude, especially since one observer's rabbi may be another's charlatan. However, it is possible to get some idea of the magnitude of this immigration by looking at the biographies in Tzvi Rabinowicz's *Encyclopedia of Hasidism*. In it, some forty-seven Hasidic rabbis are listed as having immigrated to North America in the period 1893–1934. All but two of them are said to have arrived after 1920. Not surprisingly, most of them wound up in New York (twelve in Manhattan, ten in Brooklyn, and four in the Bronx). Other cities include Chicago (five), Philadelphia (four), Boston (three), Detroit (two), St. Louis (two), Montreal, Toronto, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Milwaukee (one each).[53]

Perhaps the best illustration of the immigration of Hasidic rabbis to North America in this period is the story of the Twersky family, descended from the

well-known Ukrainian Hasidic leader, Rabbi Mordecai of Chernobyl.[54] No less than six Twersky cousins came to America between 1913 and 1938. The first to come was Rabbi David Mordecai Twersky, who settled in New York in 1913, but also visited Hasidic congregations in other major communities, such as Philadelphia.[55]

His house, located at 9 Attorney Street, included a synagogue, Kehal Hasidim, that advertised itself as having "hundreds of members, all of them [God-]fearing and perfect, for only Sabbath-observant and proper Jews are accepted as members." The Talner Rebbe further announced that he received visitors from 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M., and from 5:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M.[56] His younger brother, Rabbi Moshe Zvi, came to New York in 1922 and shortly thereafter moved to Philadelphia at the behest of a group of Hasidim, presumably those who had been visited by Rabbi David Mordecai.[57] A third brother, Rabbi Meshullam Zusia, came to Boston in 1927. A cousin, Rabbi Hanokh Henikh Twersky, arrived in Chicago in 1924, and Rabbi Jacob Isaac, who came originally to Chicago in 1926, moved to Milwaukee in 1927 to become Rabbi of Congregation *Anshe Sfard* there.[58] Rabbi Jacob Israel Twersky came to the United States in 1938, settling in Brooklyn. In 1934, Rabbi David Mordecai's son, Rabbi Yohanan, added to the network of Twerskys in North America by moving to Montreal, where he presided over a Talner *bet ha-midrash*.

The Twerskys may have constituted the largest family group of Hasidic rabbis to settle in North America in this period, but they were far from alone. There were enough to necessitate the creation of an organization, the Agudas ha-Admorim of the United States and Canada. Too little is known about this organization, which was apparently founded in 1924 and led by Rabbis Oshea Rabinowitz and Yehuda Aryeh Perlow, the Novominsker Rebbe, who had arrived in America in 1922.[59] Its very name, however, evokes that of the organization of eastern European Orthodox rabbis, the Agudas ha-Rabbonim of the United States and Canada, founded in 1902.[60] It is reasonable to assume that just as the Agudas ha-Rabbonim was founded in order to separate those North American rabbis who had "proper" rabbinic preparation from those who did not, so the Agudas ha-Admorim was an attempt to separate "valid" from "false" claimants to Hasidic spiritual leadership. It seems also reasonable to assume that the Agudas ha-Admorim was founded at least partially as a counterweight to the power of the Agudas ha-Rabbonim, which was dominated by non-Hasidic Lithuanian rabbis.

It is not possible in this article to detail the stories of all, or even of most, of the Hasidic rabbis who came to North America in the interwar period. I would, however, like to go into some detail concerning the Hasidic rabbis who settled in Philadelphia. The first to come was Rabbi Moshe Lipschitz, who was born in Galicia. He arrived in Philadelphia in 1911 after a short sojourn in St. Louis. He was known to some as the "Philadelphier Rebbe" and to others as the

"Sechter Zaddik," after his residence on South Sixth Street.[61] The next to arrive, already mentioned, was Rabbi Moshe Zvi Twersky, the Talner Rebbe. The third was Rabbi Jacob Rabinowitz, the Monstricher Rebbe.[62] He came to America in 1924 at the age of 23 along with his father, Rabbi Osheah Rabinowitz, who settled in Brooklyn, became popularly known as the "Brownsviller Rebbe," and served as president of the Agudas ha-Admorim.[63]

The presence of these three rebbes in Philadelphia, each with his own synagogue and following and each with connections to other Hasidic leaders both in North America and in Europe, indicate that by the 1920s, a Hasidic immigrant community of some substance had been created not merely in New York, but also in many of the larger immigrant communities in North America. The fact that many of these leaders, such as the Philadelphier, the Brownsviller, and the Bostoner, were publicly identified with their North American place of residence rather than their European places of origin seems to indicate as well that there was a process of Americanization taking place, even among those who must be considered to have been most resistant to "America" and all it stood for. Thus, many of these Hasidic rabbis acquired a command of the English language. Some, like the Boyaner Rebbe, did so through a daily reading of the *New York Times*.[64] Others had to deal with seemingly non-Hasidic events such as Fourth of July picnics and ladies' auxiliary gatherings.[65]

The evidence that has been presented here, while far from comprehensive, is, arguably I think, sufficient for us to understand that we are dealing with a reasonably widespread phenomenon of pre-World War II Hasidic life in North America. This understanding adds to our ability to nuance the complex phenomenon of Jewish immigration to North America in two ways. First, it enriches our understanding of the religious life of the immigrants by factoring in Hasidism, which has not been given its full due. Second, and perhaps most important, it allows us an opportunity to examine the ways in which scholarship on the period of mass eastern European Jewish immigration to North America all too often did not see what it was not prepared to see.

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Notes

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[2]Cited in Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004, p. 177.

[3]For a review essay on the scholarly literature on Hasidism in North America, see Janet Belcove-Shalin, "Introduction," *New World Hasidim: Ethnographic Studies of Hasidic Jews in America*, Janet Belcove-Shalin, ed., Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.

[4]For a discussion of Rabbi Schneersohn's escape from Europe and entry into the United States, see Bryan Mark Rigg, *Rescued from the Reich: How One of Hitler's Soldiers Saved the Lubavitcher Rebbe*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

[5]Cf. Ira Robinson, "The First Hasidic Rabbis in North America," *American Jewish Archives Journal*, Volume 44, 1992, pp. 501–515; id., "An Identification and a Correction," *American Jewish Archives Journal*, Volume 47, 1995, pp. 331–332; Cf. Steven Lapidus, "New Galicia: Hasidic Rabbis and Rebbes in Prewar Canada," *Canadian Jewish Studies*, Volume 12, pp. 1–30.

[6]Lloyd P. Gartner, s.v. "Hasidism," *Encyclopedia Judaica,* Ramat-Gan, 1970, Volume 7, Column 1399.

[7]Cf. Jeffrey Gurock, *American Jewish Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective*, Hoboken, NJ, KTAV, 1996; Kimmy Caplan, *Orthodoxy in the New World: Immigrant Rabbis and Preaching in America, 1881–1924* [Hebrew], Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 2002; Ira Robinson, *Rabbis and Their Community: Studies in the Eastern European Orthodox Rabbinate in Montreal, 1896–1930*, Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2007.

[8]Ada Rappoport-Albert, "Hagiography With Footnotes: Edifying Tales and the Writing of History in Hasidism," in *Essays in Jewish Historiography*, Ada Rappoport-Albert, ed., Atlanta: Scholars' Press, 1991, pp. 119–159; Nahum Karlinsky, "Between Historiography and Biography: the Beginning of Hasidic Orthodox Historiography" [Hebrew], *Zion*, Volume 63, 1998, pp. 189–212.

[9]Ira Robinson, "Hasidic Hagiography and Jewish Modernity," in *Jewish History and Jewish Memory: Essays in Honor of Yosef Haim Yerushalmi*, Elisheva Carlebach, John M. Efron, and David N. Myers, eds., Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 1998, pp. 405–412; Cf. Yosef Haim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982.

[10]Cf. Pierre Anctil, "Introduction," in *Le Mouvement ouvrier juif au Canada, 1904–1920*, Simon Belkin, traduit du Yiddish par Pierre Anctil, Sillery: Septentrion, 1999, p. 17ff.

[11]Cf. Ruth Wisse, I. L. *Peretz and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991, pp. 55–59.

[12]Dan Miron, *The Image of the Shtetl and Other Studies of the Modern Jewish Literary Imagination*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000, p. 8. The same could be said of Shalom Aleichem. Cf. David Roskies, "An-sky, Sholem Aleichem, and the Master Narrative of Russian Jewry," in *The Worlds of S. An-sky: A Russian Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century*, Gabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein, eds., Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006, p. 39.

[13]For a decidedly anti-Hasidic interpretation of eastern European Jewish history, see Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1967, pp. 374–394. Raphael Mahler, in his *Hasidism and the Jewish Enlightenment: Their Confrontation in Galicia and Poland in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1985; translated from the Yiddish by Eugene Orenstein and from the Hebrew by Aaron Klein and Jenny Machlowitz Klein), deals extensively with opposition to Hasidism in the nineteenth century on the part of Jewish advocates of the Jews adapting to the standards and mores of western civilization.

[14]"Hasidim, Hasidism," *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1901–1910, Volume 6, pp. 255–256, accessed at http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/

[15]This stereotype is reflected in Steven Hertzberg's study of Atlanta Jewry, in which he stated: "The Hasidim tended to be less learned and sophisticated than the Mitnagedim." *Strangers Within the Gate City: The Jews of Atlanta, 1845–1815*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1978, p. 64.

[16]Yehuda Rosenthal, "*Perakim be-Toledot ha-Yishuv ha-Yehudi ha-Mizrah Eropei be-Shikago,*" *Pinkas Chicago*, Simon Rawidowicz, ed., Chicago: 1952, p. 16, note 47.

[17]Y.E. Bernstein, *The Jews in Canada (In North America): An Eastern European View of the Montreal Jewish Community in 1884*, Canadian Jewish Studies Chapbook Series No. 1, Montreal: Hungry I Books, 2004, p. 18. Translated from the Hebrew by Ira Robinson.

[18]*The American Hebrew,* March 17, 1893, p. 66.

[19]Robinson, "The Prehistory of a Legal Classic: The Origins of the *Mishnah Berurah,*" presented at Canadian Society for the Study of Religion, 2003; Cf. Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005, p. 151ff.

[20]Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, "Hasidism, Havurot, and the Jewish Street," *Jewish Social Studies*, Volume 10, Winter, 2004, pp. 20–54.

[21]In a certain sense, this problem is similar to the scholarly debate on the Jewish identity of the conversos of Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For some scholars, the conversos did not fulfill classical rabbinic definitions of Jewishness and hence were not to be considered "Jewish." For others, applying different criteria of "Jewishness" yielded significantly different results. See Benzion Netanyahu, *The Marranos of Spain: From the Late 14th to the Early 16th Century, According to Contemporary Hebrew Sources*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999; *Conversos on Trial: The Inquisition in Ciudad Real*, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1981 (translated into English by Yael Guiladi); Rene Levine Melammed, *A Question of Identity: Iberian Conversos in Historical Perspective*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

[22]Cf. Arthur Hertzberg, "The American Jew and His Religion," in *Understanding American Judaism*, Jacob Neusner, ed., p. 14; M. Herbert Danzger, *Returning to Tradition: The Contemporary Revival of Orthodox Judaism*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989, p, 24; Aaron Rothkoff, *Bernard Revel: Builder of American Jewish Orthodoxy*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1972, pp. 8, 10; Michael R. Weisser, *A Brotherhood of Memory: Jewish Landsmanschaften in the New World*, New York: Basic Books, 1985, p. 14; Irving Abella, A *Coat of Many Colours: Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada*, Toronto: Lester and Orpen Denys, 1990, p. 122. I would like to thank my student, Steven Lapidus, for these references.

[23]Milton Doroshkin, *Yiddish in America: Social and Cultural Foundations*, Teaneck, New Jersey: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1965, pp. 142–143.

[24]Gurock, *American Jewish Orthodoxy*, p. 81; Sarna, *American Judaism*, p. 167; Charles Liebman, *Aspects of the Religious Behavior of American Jews*, New York: KTAV, 1974, pp. 26–28, 36–37; Deborah Dash Moore, *At Home in America: Second Generation New York Jews*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1981, pp. 123–124.

[25]Rischin, *The Promised City*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962, p. 104.

[26]Louis Jacobs, *Hasidic Prayer*, New York: Schocken Books, 1973, p. 36ff.; Cf. Pinchas Giller, "Between Poland and Jerusalem: Kabbalistic Prayer in Early Modernity," *Modern Judaism*, Volume 24, Number 3, 2004, pp. 226–250.

[27]Caplan, *Orthodoxy in the New World*, p. 72ff.

[28]Stephen Speisman, *The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937*, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980, pp. 164–166.

[29]This was certainly the case in Montreal. See Ira Robinson, "The Kosher Meat War and the Jewish Community Council of Montreal, 1922–1925," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Volume 22, Number 2, 1990, pp. 41–53.

[30]"Directory of Local Organizations," pp. 185–490. Accessed at http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/1900_1901_4_NatlOrgs.pdf.

[31]*The Jewish Communal Register of New York City 1917–1918*, New York: Kehilla, 1918, pp. 145–285.

[32]Ada Green and Judi Langer-Surnamer Caplan, "Works Progress Administration (WPA) Federal Writers Project Survey of State and Local Historical Records (1939) Church Records Jewish-Synagogue: Introduction." Accessed at http://home.att.net/~landsmanshaft/wpaform.htm.

[33]The same listing contains twelve other *Sfard* congregations located in Boston, San Francisco, Chicago, Louisville, Baltimore, St. Louis, Manchester, Cleveland, Philadelphia, and Milwaukee, plus two *Nusach Ari* congregations in Baltimore and Philadelphia.

[34]The Hasidic courts represented in the names include Vishnitz, Kaidanow, Stolin, Slonim, Kobrin, Bayon [Boyan?], Rizhin (2), Czortkov (2), Trisk, and Karlin.

[35]There were none listed for either Queens or Staten Island.

[36]Another Hasidic liturgy, closely related to *Nusah Sfard*, and identified primarily with Chabad Hasidism.

[37]On communications, see Menahem Blondheim, "*Ha-Rabanut ha-Ortodoxit Megale 'et Amerika: Ha-Geografia shel ha-Ruah be-Mitavim shel Tikshoret*," in *Be-Ikvot Kolumbus: Amerika, 1492–1992*, M. Eliav-Pladon, ed., Jerusalem: 1997, pp. 483–511. Id., "'*Vela-Shom'im Yin'am: Ha-Derasha ha-Ortodoxit be-Arzot ha-Berit beyn Heyza Rabanit le-Bikush 'Ammami,"* in *Ha-Tarbut ha-'Ammami: Kovez Ma'amarim*, B.Z. Kedar, ed., Jerusalem: 1996, pp. 277–304; Jonathan Sarna, "The Myth of No Return: Jewish Return Migration to Eastern Europe, 1881–1914," *American Jewish History*, Volume 71, 1981, pp. 256–268; Ira Robinson, "A Global Shtetl: American Orthodox Rabbis in the Early Twentieth Century and Their World Wide Web of Communication," Scholars' Conference on American Jewish History, 2004. Id., "The Globalization of Diaspora Communications Among Jews at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: An Analysis of Schmuel N. Gottlieb's *Ohole-Schem*," presented at Jewish Diasporas: Myths and Realities, York University, 2005.

[38]M. Freeman, *Fifty Years of Jewish Life in Philadelphia*, Philadelphia: Mid-City Press, 1943, pp. 30, 37. In Yiddish.

[39]Speisman, *The Jews of Toronto*, pp. 97–98.

[40]On early Hasidic life in Boston, see Seth Farber, "Between Brooklyn and Brookline: American Hasidism and the Evolution of the Bostoner Hasidic Tradition," *American Jewish Archives Journal*, Volume 52, 2000, pp. 34–53.

[41]*Jewish Encyclopedia*, Volume 7, New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1901–1906, p. 468, s.v. "Kentucky."

[42]Robinson, "First Hasidic Rabbis in North America," p. 504.

[43]Yudel Rosenberg, *Ha-Keriah ha-Kedosha*, New York: Rosenbeg Printing Co., 1919, p. 9. On Rosenberg, see Ira Robinson, "Kabbalist and Communal Leader: Rabbi Yudel Rosenberg and the Canadian Jewish Community," *Canadian Jewish Studies*, Volume 1, 1993, pp. 41–58.

[44]M.G. Geshuri, "*He-Hasidut ve-Niguneha*," in *Encyclopedia of the Jewish Diaspora: Warsaw Volume*, Itzhak Gruenbaum, ed., Jerusalem-Tel Aviv, 1953, p. 326; Cf. Weisser, *A Brotherhood of Memory*, p. 47.

[45]Jerome R. Mintz, *Hasidic People: A Place in the New World*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992, pp. 14–15. Similarly, R. David Elimelch Zanger left Cracow for Montreal on the advice of the Bobover Rebbe. *Toldoth Anshe Shem*, Oscar Z. Rand, ed., New York: Hever ha Ma'arekhet lal yad Heyrat toldet anshe shem, 1950, p. 106. It is claimed that R. Pinchas David Horowitz, the Bostoner Rebbe, was first encouraged to immigrate to America in the early 1900s by his uncle. Significantly, he is said to have resisted this suggestion and only immigrated to Boston in 1916 because he was unable to return to Palestine because of World War I. Hanoch Teller, *The Bostoner: Stories and Recollections From the Colorful Chassidic Court of the Bostoner Rebbe, Rabbi Levi I. Horowitz*, Jerusalem and New York: Feldheim, 1990, p. 13.

[46]August 11, 1935, p. 28.

[47]Sh. Erdberg, "Rikhtige Rebbes–un Falshe," *Jewish Daily News*, November 2, 1927; Cf. J.D. Eisenstein, *Otsar Zikhronotai: Autobiography and Memoirs*, New York: 1929, p. 156.

[48]In the case of Lubavitcher (Chabad) Hasidim, it is noteworthy that prior to the 1920s, individual Lubavitchers did come to the United States and form congregations, but the Lubavitcher rebbes discouraged such immigration until the 1920s. Shalom Dober Levin, *Toldois Chabad B'Artzois Ha'Bris*, Brooklyn: Kehot, 1988, pp. 7–8, 10, 15.

[49]Joshua Heshl Rabinowitz, *Torat Avot*, New York: A. Rechtmann, 1926, introduction.

[50]Erdberg, "*Rikhtige Rebbes–un Falshe*."

[51]Singer's article originally appeared on February 6, 1944; it was reprinted in Yiddish in *Forward*, December 31, 2004, pp. 10, 18–19.

[52]"Schwartz in a Farce: 'American Chasidim, a Satire on a Religious Sect," *New York Times*, March 17, 1928.

[53]Rabinowicz, *Encyclopedia*, Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, 1996, pp. 53, 63, 105–107, 117, 130, 140, 175, 221, 222, 276–278, 280, 289, 303, 329, 346–347, 365, 367, 389, 390–391, 406, 415, 418, 465, 483, 502–506, 509, 517–518, 526, 552.

[54]On the Talner Hasidic Dynasty, see B. Rom, "*Semukhim la-'ad le-'olam*", in *ha-Modia*, December 7, 1990, p. 10.

[55]He visited congregation B'nai Reuven in Philadelphia for two weeks in 1915. That congregation hosted other visiting Hasidic spiritual leaders. See "Chasidik Tsadik," *Jewish Exponent,* Philadelphia, January 16, 1914; Cf. M. Freeman, p. 47.

[56]Advertisement in *Ha-'Ivri*, February 11, 1916, p. 16. This advertisement was repeated in the same journal on March 24, April 7, and April 17, 1916. A similar advertisement, on behalf of the Radovitzer Rebbe, who was located at 293 East Third Street, was published in *Ha-'Ivri* on March 17, 1916, p. 16, and repeated on April 17, 1916. R. David Mordecai Twersky also advertised his New Year greetings in *Ha-'Ivri*, October 6, 1916, p. 14. There is an indication that Rabbi Twersky claimed a larger following than those who attended his synagogue. The 1918 Kehilla survey has Twersky's Congregation K'hal Chasidim claim eight hundred members with a seating capacity in the synagogue of only two hundred. *Jewish Communal Register*, p. 213. For further evidence of Rabbi Twersky's activism on behalf of European Hasidic leaders suffering during World War I, see "*Oyfruf fun dem Talner Reb'n…*," *Keneder Adler*, Montreal, May 2, 1915.

[57]*Filadelfier 'Idishe Anshtaltn un Zeyere Fihrer,* Y.L. Malamut, ed., Philadelphia, 1942/3, pp. 79–80.

[58]Abraham J. Twersky, *Generation to Generation: Personal Recollections of a Chassidic Legacy*, Brooklyn: Traditional Press, 1986, p. ii.

[59]*Ha-Ma'ayan*, Volume 14, number 19, February 12, 2000, accessed at http://roshhashana.torah.org/learning/hamaayan/5760/terumah.html

[60]Gurock, *American Jewish Orthodoxy*, p. 6ff; Aaron Rakeffet-Rothkoff, *The Silver Era in American Jewish Orthodoxy: Rabbi Eliezer Silver and His Generation*, Jerusalem: Feldheim; New York, Yeshiva University Press, 1981.

[61]Hindy Krohn, *The Way It Was: Touching Vignettes of Growing Up Jewish in the Philadelphia of Long Ago*, Brooklyn: Mesorah, 1989, p. 114.

[62]Malamut, *Filadelfier*, pp. 80–81.

[63]*New York Times*, April 28, 1938, p. 23

[64]Mintz, *Hasidic People*, p. 18.

[65]Robert Tabak, *The Transformation of Jewish Identity: The Philadelphia Experience*, Ann Arbor: UMI, 1990, p. 173.