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The American Jewish Archives Journal

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Set of Hebrew Union College bookends created in the form of the Cincinnati classroom building towers.
Produced by Rookwood Pottery of Cincinnati in 1948.
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Selma Stern-Taeubler, right, at the American Jewish Archives working alongside Pauline Kolsky, secretary to Dr. Marcus, and Bertha Lauter, left, c. early 1950s.

(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

TO OUR READERS...

It is merely a coincidence that four scholars, all female, have authored articles in this particular issue of our journal. This happenstance sparked an interesting question: Who were the women who played important roles in the history of this journal and, concomitantly, in the history of the American Jewish Archives itself?

The AJA's first archivist, Selma Stern-Taeubler (1890–1981), was appointed to her post in 1947 in conjunction with the appointment of the AJA's first director, Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus (1896–1995).[1] For a decade, Dr. Stern-Taeubler played a major role in charting a course for the development of the AJA as well as the character of the AJA's journal, which began appearing in 1948. The nature of her contributions during those formative years deserves amplification.

Stern-Taeubler was a historian who contributed significantly to American Jewish history at a time when few women had scholarly credentials and worked in this field. She was born in Kippenheim, Germany (located just south of Strasbourg), to Dr. Julius and Emilie (Durlacher) Stern. As a youngster, she distinguished herself as a brilliant student and, in 1904, she claimed to have been the first female to matriculate at the gymnasium in neighboring Baden-Baden. She went on to pursue advanced studies in German history and languages at the universities of Heidelberg and Munich. In 1914, Stern-Taeubler published her first major work on the French revolutionary and self-proclaimed "Orator for Humankind," Anarchasis Cloots (1755–1794). Although she concentrated on German history initially, Stern-Taeubler soon shifted her interests to the study of German Jewish history. In 1919, she became a research fellow at the *Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin, which was founded and directed by historian Eugen Taeubler (1879–1953). He would subsequently become her husband.[2]

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, Stern-Taeubler, as she now called herself, began publishing important studies on the history of German Jewry including a major work on the history of Prussian Jewry, *Der preussische Staat und die Juden* (1925). In 1929, she published a biographical study on the German Jewish financier, Joseph Süss Oppenheimer (1698–1738), which Jacob Rader Marcus later characterized as a work filled with "spirit and insight." By the dawn of the 1930s, she had earned "a career of distinction in pre-Hitlerian Germany." Her work was disrupted by the rise of Hitler and the advent of the Third Reich. Once the Nazis closed the *Akademie* in 1934, the couple— like so many of their peers—lost their jobs and their livelihoods. Fortunately, Eugen and Selma's lives were spared when, in 1941, the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati invited Eugen (as one of a modest number of refugee scholars) to join its faculty, thereby enabling him to secure a coveted entry visa.[3]

Although little is known about her early years in Cincinnati—tradition holds that she was compelled to clean houses to earn a livelihood—there can be little doubt that Stern-Taeubler's academic world as it had been in Germany no longer existed. Her adjustment to a new life in Cincinnati must have been a difficult and frustrating experience. One can easily understand why Stern-Taeubler would have been eager to accept Marcus's invitation to become the AJA's first archivist in 1947. In this capacity, she would once again have an opportunity to contribute to an intellectual enterprise that interested her and for which she was uniquely qualified.

For Marcus, who was determined to create a national research center from a *tabula rasa*, having a scholar like Stern-Taeubler working as an archivist must have seemed like a stroke of good fortune. Cast out of Germany and her familiar environment, Stern-Taeubler nevertheless possessed an array of professional skills that Marcus and the fledgling AJA sorely needed. She was a meticulous researcher with "scientific" training who, in Marcus's opinion, had produced "monumental works on Prussian Jewry." The newly established AJA would make good use of her knowledge and skill.[4]

Creating a "detailed analytical index" of the Mordecai M. Kaplan Papers—donated to the AJA by Kaplan himself—became one of Stern-Taeubler's first assignments. That inventory, like so many of those she created, is still in use today. In addition to her archival work, Stern-Taeubler contributed to the AJA's journal. Beginning in the second year of the journal's existence, she began publishing an annotated roster of the AJA's recent "Acquisitions" (a practice that the AJA's archival professionals continue to the present day). As she noted in her brief introduction to that first effort, the AJA's holdings were already burgeoning thanks to a steady flow of documentary contributions from "congregational officers, community leaders, secretaries of societies, fraternities, committees, lodges, clubs, and homes, and through the courtesy and helpful cooperation of rabbis and others all over the country." Her meticulousness and attention to detail are evident in all of her rosters. Marcus was undoubtedly correct when he later observed that "students who use her lists of acquisitions in the American Jewish Archives will appreciate the magnificent job she has done."[5]

Given her record of significant scholarship, Stern-Taeubler merits the distinction of being called the first woman historian to have her work published in the AJA's journal. In 1952, she prepared a valuable compilation of documentary information gleaned from the American press in 1852 and listed chronologically from January through December. Her objective was to provide the journal's readers with glimpses of the American Jewish experience from one hundred years earlier. This woman's contributions to the AJA and its journal were remarkable. Here was a distinguished scholar working in a new language, whose previous research had focused on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Prussian Jewry. Within a few years of relocating to Cincinnati, she was col-

lecting primary resource material and writing in English about the American Jewish community—a community that was far more than an ocean removed from the world she knew best.

For a decade, Stern-Taeubler labored together with Marcus. Although her contributions to the early development of the AJA and its journal have generally been overlooked, when she retired in 1956, Marcus took special note of his colleague's exceptional contributions to the AJA and to the life of the mind:

> The same understanding of the importance of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds, which is displayed in all her books, she brought also to her work at the Archives. Many scholars have spirit and insight, but not all have a deep-seated respect for accuracy; nor are they all devoted to the truth insofar as it is given to them to recognize it and to acknowledge it. Selma Stern-Tauebler is, with all her other gifts, a profoundly conscientious scholar … [and] the Archives … in large measure, is "the work of her hands."[6]

In addition to recognizing the important contributions of Stern-Taeubler, it is quite clear that Marcus was genuinely aware of the fact that women's lives and experiences had largely been excised from the history of American Jewry. His interest in collecting remarkable documentation on the American Jewish woman testifies to the fact that he was not only cognizant of this gaping hole in the field but also intended to collect and preserve the critical data that future historians would need in order to fill it and reconstruct the history of American Jewish women and, in turn, reconceptualize American Jewish history. In 1981, Marcus published an important collection of these primary source documents, many of which he himself had brought to the AJA.[7]

In addition to Stern-Taeubler, other women contributed to the American Jewish Archives during its early years. In 1953, Frances Fox Sandmel (1917–1989), a poet and wife of HUC faculty member Samuel Sandmel (1911–1979), became the first woman to publish a book review in the AJA's journal. Other women would contribute books reviews in the late 1950s and early 1960s.[8] In 1963, the journal published an intriguing memoir, "The Jews of Alaska," written by Jessie Bloom. Other memoirs by American Jewish women would follow.[9]

In 1968—three years prior to the formation in New York of Ezrat Nashim, the well-known women's study group that advocated the advancement of women's role in Jewish life, and four years before HUC ordained Sally Priesand, the first woman rabbi— Rose Klein, the wife of Rabbi Joseph Klein (1912–1996), published a historical essay on "Washington's Thanksgiving Proclamation."[10] In 1976, Sarah Schmidt, then teaching American Jewish Studies at the University of Maryland, became the first woman with a doctorate from an American university to contribute an article to the journal. The following year, Naomi Cohen, a professor of Jewish history at Hunter College of the City of New York, published an article in our pages. As this issue shows, many others would follow.[11]

The number of women scholars in the field of American Jewish history has grown dramatically over the past three decades. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, women, who have since gone on to careers teaching and studying American Jewish history, won a considerable number of AJA fellowships. Today, many of the field's leading scholars are women and, on the basis of those who are currently conducting their doctoral research at the AJA, we can be confident that women will continue to occupy a prominent place in the field.

One of the most beneficial consequences of this trend comes from the proliferation of new perspectives that women have brought to the study of American Jewish history. The authors who have contributed to this current issue exemplify this observation. Joan S. Friedman's research on Solomon B. Freehof sheds new light on how this Reform Jewish scholar's childhood and educational experiences influenced the directions of his career. In Joellyn Wallen Zollman's innovative article on the synagogue gift shop, we have found a new lens through which we can examine and evaluate the evolving nature of American Jewish culture during the course of the twentieth century. Maxine S. Seller's analysis of Americans who became citizens of Israel during the first decade and a half of the state's existence enables us to begin the process of comparing and contrasting the attitudes and values of American Jewish immigrants to Jews who immigrated to Israel from other native lands. Finally, Mara W. Cohen Ioannides's documentary analysis uncovers an ideological struggle that pitted Henry Berkowitz (1857–1924), editor of the first Union Haggadah (1907), against Samuel S. Cohon (1888–1959), editor of a revised version of that same ritual (1923). Their debate over one section of the Passover ritual opens our eyes to the historical and philosophical issues that separated two generations of reformers.

In his narrative essay on the history of American Jewish women, Jacob Rader Marcus prophesied that:

> The new generation of [American Jewish women] will become increasingly important. In the past, Judaism has survived as much through its women as through its cocky minority of men.… Women have always been the invisible majority.[12]

The current issue of *The American Jewish Archives Journal* demonstrates that the prediction that Marcus published in 1981 concerning the growing prominence of a new generation of American Jewish women has come to pass. We are grateful to the many scholars, women and men, who contribute to the pages of this journal and concurrently enrich the field of American Jewish history.

G.P.Z.
Cincinnati, Ohio

Notes

[1]On Stern-Taeubler, see Carole B. Balin's essay, "Selma Stern-Taeubler," in *Jewish Women in America: A Historical Encyclopedia* 2 Vols., eds. Paula E. Hyman and Deborah Dash Moore (New York: Routledge Press, 1997), 1339–1340. On p. 1340, Balin incorrectly labels Stern-Taeubler the "founding director" of the American Jewish Archives, a credit that belongs to Jacob Rader Marcus. She was unquestionably the AJA's first archivist. See also, "Stern-Taeubler, Selma," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 15 (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971), 399.

[2]See *Anarchasis Cloots der Redner des Menschengeschlechts als Mitglied des Nationalkonvents* (Berlin: Erbering, 1914).

[3]Jacob Rader Marcus, "Selma Stern-Taeubler, Archivist, Retires," *American Jewish Archives* 8, n. 2 (Oct. 1956): 132. See *Der preussische Staat und die Juden* (Berlin: Schwetschke, 1925) and *Jud Süss: ein Betrag zur deutschen und zur jüdischen Geschichte* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1929). For information on HUC's role in saving German Jewish refugee scholars from the Nazi Holocaust, see Michael A. Meyer, "The Refugee Scholars Project of the Hebrew Union College," in *A Bicentennial Festschrift for Jacob Rader Marcus*, ed. Bertram Wallace Korn (New York: KTAV and AJHS, 1976), 359–376.

[4]Marcus, 132. For more on Stern-Taeubler's intellectual contributions in the postwar period, see Hannah-Villette Dalby, "German-Jewish Female Intellectuals and the Recovery of German-Jewish Heritage in the 1940s and 1950s." *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 52 (2007): 111–129.

[5]The Kaplan inventory is cited in the first journal. "Acquisitions," *American Jewish Archives* 1, n.1 (June 1948): 26. Selma Stern-Taeubler's first acquisitions list is cited in the second issue, *American Jewish Archives* 2, n. 2 (Jan. 1950): 23–32. Marcus, "Selma Stern-Taeubler," 132.

[6]Marcus, 132. Marcus's quotation comes from a variation on Psalm 90:17.

[7]Marcus, *The American Jewish Woman: A Documentary History* (Cincinnati: Ktav Publishing House, 1981).

[8]Frances Fox Sandmel's review of Elliot Cohen's *Commentary on the American Scene, American Jewish Archives* 5, n. 2 (June 1953): 136–138. Anita Libman Lebeson reviewed Harry Golden's *Only in America* in *American Jewish Archives* 11, n. 1 (April 1959): 98–99; Martha Neumark Montor reviewed *The Status Seekers* by Vance Packard, *American Jewish Archives* 13, n. 1 (April 1961): 96 and, in that same issue, Barbara Miller Solomon reviewed Morris Schappes's *The Jews in the United States, A Pictorial History: 1654 to the Present*, pp. 101–102.

[9]Jessie Bloom, "Jews in Alaska," *American Jewish Archives* 15, n. 2 (Nov. 1963): 97–116; Della Rubinstein Adler, "Immigrants in Buffalo," *American Jewish Archives* 18, n. 1 (April 1966): 20–28; Bella W. Rosenbaum, "In My Lifetime," *American Jewish Archives* 19, n. 1 (April 1967): 3–33.

[10]Rose Klein, "Washington's Thanksgiving Proclamation," *American Jewish Archives* 20, n. 2 (Nov. 1968): 156–162.

[11]Sarah Schmidt, "Horace M. Kallen and the 'Americanization' of Zionism. In Memoriam," *American Jewish Archives* 28, n. 1 (April 1976): 59–73. Naomi Cohen, "Pioneers of American Jewish Defence," *American Jewish Archives* 29, n. 2 (Nov. 1977): 116–150. Shortly after Cohen's article, Jenna Weissman Joselit published "Without Ghettoism: A History of the Intercollegiate Menorah Association, 1906–1930," *American Jewish Archives* 30, n. 2 (Nov. 1978): 133–154.

[12]Marcus, *The American Jewish Woman*, 187.



This photo of Freehof is taken from a scrapbook of Maurice L. Zigmond showing life at Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, in the early 1920s.

(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

ARTICLE

The Making of a Reform Rabbi: Solomon B. Freehof from Childhood to HUC

Joan S. Friedman

Solomon Bennett Freehof (1892–1990), the son of a *sofer* (Torah scribe) from the Ukraine who traced his ancestry to the first Lubavitcher Rebbe, was born in London and raised in Baltimore. He entered Hebrew Union College (HUC) in 1911 and was ordained in 1915, a year after receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Cincinnati (UC). He immediately joined the HUC faculty and remained there until 1924, with time off in 1918–1919 for military chaplaincy service in Europe. While teaching at HUC he earned a Doctor of Divinity degree. In 1924 he went to Chicago as rabbi of Kehilath Anshe Mayriv Congregation, and in 1934 he became the senior rabbi of Rodef Shalom Congregation in Pittsburgh. He retired from Rodef Shalom in 1966 and remained in Pittsburgh for the rest of his life.

Freehof was a leading member of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR). His long life spanned most of the existence of Reform Judaism as an organized movement in North America, and the enormous range of his rabbinic activity—and of his influence through many of his former students— meant that he left few aspects of the movement's development in the mid-twentieth century untouched. He served on its Liturgy Committee for more than twenty years and was its chair during the 1930s, when it carried out a major revision of the *Union Prayer Book*. He served as vice-president of the CCAR in 1941–1943 and president from 1943–1945—years when the intense controversy over Zionism that led to the founding of the American Council for Judaism threatened to split the Reform rabbinate and the Reform movement. At the same time, Freehof chaired the CCAR's Emergency Committee on Placement, which tried to balance the military's need for chaplains with civilians' need for rabbis. From 1942 until the mid-1950s, he also chaired the Responsa Committee of the Jewish Welfare Board's (JWB) Committee on Army and Navy Religious Activities (later known as the Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy), a position that required him to work closely with Conservative and Orthodox rabbis to decide questions of Jewish ritual practice in a military context. Throughout his career he was an active member of the Reform movement's Commission on Jewish Education, authoring a number of books on liturgy and Bible for youth and adults. After World War II he served for some years as president of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, traveling extensively to Europe, Israel, and South Africa.

As senior rabbi of the largest and most prestigious synagogue in Pittsburgh, Freehof was a prominent figure in the local community. He excelled at fulfilling that rabbinic role so near and dear to earlier generations of American Jews: representing Judaism to the Christian community. Freehof was a dynamic and gifted preacher and public speaker and regularly drew an attendance of hundreds, by no means limited to the Jewish community. His Sunday morning lecture-sermons and his Wednesday morning book reviews were always popular. He was also a frequent speaker on radio and in various public forums.

Freehof's scholarly and rabbinic oeuvre has not been equally enduring or of equal value in all areas. His Bible commentaries, for example, are outdated. His work as editor of the revised *Union Prayer Book* was quite important, but those 1940s volumes were replaced with newer editions in the 1970s. Although he was a magnificent preacher and speaker, his sermon-lectures, book reviews, and adult education lectures on Shakespeare and on the Bible, which drew mass audiences in Chicago and Pittsburgh for more than forty years, are, for the most part, mere curiosities today.

Freehof's most enduring contribution to Reform Judaism came through his status as a scholar par excellence of the responsa literature, an endeavor that followed both from his service as chair of the Responsa Committee for Jewish chaplains in the U.S. military as well as from his 1944 book *Reform Jewish Practice and its Rabbinic Background*, which he intended as a comprehensive guide to Reform practice. Though he served briefly on the CCAR's Responsa Committee from 1922–1924, his real connection with its work began in 1947. Freehof chaired the committee from 1955 until 1978, and his unpublished responsa correspondence during that time includes more than seven hundred inquiries. Between 1960 and 1990, he published eight volumes of what he named "Reform responsa" drawn from queries he received. In the course of writing these responsa he also developed an original theoretical framework within which to discuss and decide questions of Jewish practice in a Reform context.

Solomon B. Freehof was a member of that cohort of east European immigrants whom Kaufmann Kohler attempted to transform into classical Reform Jews upon their admission to HUC's rabbinic program. While these men were, indeed, transformed by their training, they in turn helped bring about the "reorientation"[1] of Reform Judaism beginning in the interwar years. This study of Freehof's childhood and years as a student and faculty member at HUC offers both a portrait of a respected leader of American Reform Judaism and a window into HUC and the Reform rabbinate in the early years of the twentieth century.

Family Origins and Early Childhood

An admiring member of Chicago's Jewish community wrote this about Freehof in the 1930s, and it held true throughout his long life:

> It is because of no inferiority complex that Dr. Freehof rarely speaks of himself. He discusses freely ideas and theories, philosophy and social science, ethics and esthetics, in fact all higher things in life, to which he applies a language all his own, a language rich and beautiful—but it is almost impossible to extract from him anything about himself. [2]

Details of Freehof's family background and early life are few and difficult to verify; he himself wrote only brief memoirs in personal letters and, in his eighties, recorded a few reminiscences in two interviews. A full portrait of his early years—especially the question of how he made the transition from Orthodox immigrant son, of a pious *sofer* and *mohel,* to cultured exemplar of the classical Reform rabbi—is impossible to reconstruct. The best we can do is portray the environments in which he came to maturity and place within those contexts the limited biographical information we possess.

Freehof's account of his family's origins and immigration to the United States is as follows. His father Isaac was born in Shklov, a small town in the province of Mohilev, White Russia (now Belarus), to Zalman Ber, a *sofer* and a Chabad hasid. This grandfather was, he claimed, the favorite scribe of the Chabad Hasidim in Shklov.[3] Isaac, however, did not apprentice with his father to be a scribe; rather, he left Shklov and went to Chernigev, Ukraine, where he learned his craft.[4] In Freehof's words:

> The reason was the following (and this is a bit of Chabbad [sic] history not often recorded): The third in succession of the Old Rabbi, the founder, was Zemach Zedek, the author of about six volumes of responsa. When he died, his oldest son was not deemed worthy to succeed him and a younger son was selected as the fourth leader of the Chabbad. Thereupon, the older son left Shklov and traveled south to the large city in the Ukraine, Chernigev, which then became a Chabbad bastion. Father, to serve his apprenticeship in Sofres [sic], went to Chernigev. There he met mother and married.[5]

Freehof proudly claimed that "Freehof" was one of a number of surnames borne by his extended family, all of which indicated descent from Frieda, eldest daughter of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Lyady (1745–1813, the "Alter Rebbe"), the founder of Chabad Hasidism. This claim of ancestry was definitely a family tradition; the author of the introduction to a 1938 collection of essays and articles by Freehof's brother, Morris, refers to Morris as "a descendant of the Lubavitcher Rebbes."[6] To date, however, this claim has proved impossible to verify.[7] No reference of a scribe named Zalman Ber of Shklov exists, though there are several references in the hagiographical biography of the fifth Rebbe, Rabbi Shalom Dov Baer Schneersohn (1866–1920), to an assistant scribe named "Rabbi Shlomo Friedson" who was active in the Rebbe's entourage around the turn of the twentieth century.[8] "Shlomo" is the Hebrew equivalent of the Yiddish "Zalman," and "Friedson" could well indicate descent from

Frieda. It is tempting on this basis to conclude that two scribes with similar names—only a generation or two apart, both close to the leaders of Chabad, and one of whom was Freehof's grandfather—must indicate a family of scribes descended from Frieda Schneersohn. However, if the claim of ancestry is true, the proof of it does not lie in the name "Freehof," and Freehof himself knew that, for it was he who changed his surname from "Freilachoff" (also spelled Freilichoff, Freilacoff, and Frelechoff) to "Freehof" in 1911, sometime between the end of his first year at HUC and the beginning of his second.[9] While the "ei" in Freilachoff could have been pronounced either like a long "i" or a long "a," it would never have been pronounced like a long "e" and so could not have any connection to the name "Frieda."

While it is possible that the young rabbinical student changed his name to indicate his transition to a new identity, it is likely that the change was not his idea or even his desire, particularly since he was proud of the name and its *yichus* (distinguished descent). It was a common practice at HUC in the earlier decades of the twentieth century to encourage and even to pressure students with odd-sounding, "unpronounceable" east European surnames to change them to something less foreign.[10] In any case, Freehof never revealed why he made the change; he simply adopted it to the point that when corresponding from his office with his siblings who had retained the original family name, he addressed them also as "Freehof."[11]

Although Freehof told his old friend Jacob Rader Marcus that his father Isaac migrated three hundred miles and atypically chose to learn his craft from someone other than his father out of devotion to one or another of the claimants to the Chabad mantle, he told a 1978 interviewer that his father had left Shklov to break away from Hasidism, calling him "a *misnaged* (opponent of Hasidism) with Chabad memories" who, by the time he reached Baltimore, was simply a firm traditionalist.[12] In Baltimore, Freilichoff probably gravitated to the synagogue founded by immigrants from Chernigev, Agudas Achim, which eventually merged with the Anshe Nejin congregation to form the Lubawitz Nusach Ari Congregation, with which we know he was associated. We cannot say, however, whether he was drawn to it for its Chabad association or just because the people were his *landslayt* (fellow citizens).[13]

Certainly in at least one important respect the home in which Freehof grew up was at odds with its Hasidic origins: His father was an admirer of the Maggid of Kamenets, one of the more colorful figures in the Hibbat Zion movement and the most extreme of its critics of the rabbinic establishment.[14] It is likely that the elder Freilichoff became a Zionist before he left Russia. Zionism had spread throughout the Pale in the 1880s, including in the Hasidic strongholds where he lived, despite the opposition of virtually all the rebbes.[15]

Isaac and Golda Freilichoff left Chernigev for London around 1890 with their young son Moshe (Morris, b. 1886/7), Golda's father, Yehuda Leib

Blonstein, a Chabad hasid (the "*zeyde, olov hasholom,*" who was young Solomon's first *melamed* [teacher of Torah]),[16] and a number of other relatives. They settled just off of Whitechapel Road in the East End of London, the British equivalent of New York's Lower East Side. There, they had a daughter, Jane; then a son, Solomon, born 8 August 1892; and then three more daughters, Ada, Esther, and Fannie.

One of the arguments Freehof would later advance for his approach to Reform responsa writing was his conviction that Reform was the natural result of the encounter between traditional Orthodoxy and modernity, and that Orthodoxy would inevitably moderate, if not disappear, as each successive body of traditional Jews experienced that encounter. As much as Freehof celebrated the emergence of Reform, he nevertheless evinced a deep affection, respect, and nostalgia for the traditional way of life within which he was raised. Nowhere does that emerge more clearly than in his reminiscences of his father. Thus he recalled that in London, Isaac Freilichoff

> became a *Sofer*. He wrote many Sefer Torahs. He was the Torah reader, the balkorey [sic], in a shul, but his main occupation was proof reading [sic] Sefer Torahs, since it is required that a Torah be proofread every year.
>
> Where we lived in London, at 27 Hanbury Street,[18] the window of the ground floor was large, like a shop window, and Father had a table against his window and there he proofread Sefer Torahs. This was visible to any passersby, but that made no difference; there was hardly a Gentile in the neighborhood.
>
> Sir Samuel Montagu,[19] later Lord Swaythling, when he ran for Parliament, would ride through the Jewish neighborhood in his horse and carriage. When he would see Father in the window going over a Sefer Torah, he would get out of the carriage, go into the house and stand reverently by Father's side for some time. I wish I had remembered to tell this to his daughter Lily Montagu when we met frequently under the auspices of the World Union.
>
> I remember when I was a boy of about six or seven, Father went to Germany, I think to see a doctor about his health. He had with him a letter from the Chief Rabbi of England, attesting to the fact that he was a first rate *Sofer*. [20]

Freehof left no other information about his own childhood in London, though he lived there until the age of eleven. He would have attended either the Spitalfields Jews' Free School or a state school. The former, funded by the Rothschilds, offered a combination of Jewish and general elementary education and also provided free clothing to its students. The state schools in the East End were run "along Jewish lines," i.e., they closed early on Fridays in winter, had many Jewish teachers and often a Jewish headmaster, and included about five hours of religious instruction per week. Thus, whichever school Freehof attended, we can be certain that it was in virtually a totally Jewish environment.[21] The only other detail he recalled about his London childhood was that his older brother

Morris, a "typical English Jewish boy," became a Zionist there as a member of the Jewish Lads' Brigade[22] and went to hear Theodor Herzl speak when he visited London.[23]

Youth in Baltimore

Isaac and Morris Freilichoff emigrated from England to the United States in 1902, settling in Baltimore for reasons that remain unknown. For a year and a half, they worked to earn the money for passage for the rest of the family, who made the crossing in 1903. Freehof recalled that the voyage from Liverpool to Quebec took two weeks on the Red Star Line's *Lake Erie* and that his mother had one baby in her arms and two by the hands. They spent their first week in America with his father's brother Abraham in New York. Uncle Abe took Freehof to Coney Island, where he saw Ferris wheels for the first time. Freehof recalled:

> But that's nothing. He gave me my first hot dog. A Jewish hot dog. And if you can imagine a virgin palate, tasting for the first time a spicy Jewish hot dog, you will know what the *shor ha-bor* in *Gan Eden* will taste like![24]

Of his childhood in Baltimore, Freehof said only that he attended a "German-English" public school and the Baltimore Talmud Torah,[25] so again we must rely on other sources.

In 1880, Baltimore's Jewish population was approximately ten thousand, the vast majority of German origin and still heavily German in culture. New arrivals from eastern Europe swelled that number to approximately forty thousand by 1907. They settled in the East Baltimore neighborhood, out of which the upwardly mobile German Jews began moving in the 1880s. By 1903, the year of Freehof's arrival, the city's German synagogues had all moved to the new neighborhood.[26] Many immigrants found employment in Baltimore's largely German-Jewish-owned garment industry; others labored in sweatshops for Russian Jewish owners, who were almost destitute themselves. The vast majority of these sweatshops were located along East Baltimore Street, the neighborhood's main street, just off from where the Freilichoffs lived. Like most children in the Jewish immigrant ghettoes, Freehof saw significant labor unrest. From the late 1880s through 1920, Baltimore's clothing industry was the venue for frequent strikes that pitted Russian Jewish immigrants against mostly German Jewish factory owners.[27]

The Freilichoffs lived at 117 South Exeter Street, in the very heart of Jewish East Baltimore. Solomon had only a three-block walk to the Talmud Torah where he received his Jewish education, and eighteen of the twenty-five "Russian" congregations in Baltimore in 1907 were located within a four-block radius of the family home.[28] Compared to the immigrants who toiled in the sweatshops and garment factories, the Freilichoffs were well off: According to the 1910

census record, Isaac Freilichoff owned his own home, and all the school-aged Freilichoff children were in school.[29]

Freehof's childhood differed from many Jewish immigrant childhoods in that he was exposed to Zionism, both at home and in the community. Baltimore was one of the seedbeds of Zionism in the United States. A branch of Hibbat Zion was established there in 1894; its members sent Rabbi Schepsel Shaffer of the Orthodox Shearith Israel Congregation to Basle three years later as the only American delegate to the First Zionist Congress. The first American Zionist convention was held in Baltimore in 1900 and led to the founding of the Federation of American Zionists, of which a Baltimorean, Dr. Harry Friedenwald, served as president from 1904–1918.[30] The first American "convention" of Labor Zionists also took place in Baltimore: Twenty-one delegates from ten different cities met for five days at Zionist headquarters at 5 North Front Street, only four blocks from Freehof's home.[31] Although no record exists of the names of the participants in that first Poale Zion meeting, it is highly likely that Freehof's brother Morris, an early and lifelong Poale Zion activist, was among them.[32]

Freehof later recalled that it was in Baltimore that his father became a *mohel*:

> Then Father came to America. There were not enough Sefer Torahs to be written for him to make a living, so he was trained as a *Mohel* and became, perhaps, the best known *Mohel* in Baltimore.[33]

In his eighties Freehof waxed nostalgic, recalling his home life as a child.

> Both warmth and cold reason seemed to be the basis of our family life.… In the old-fashioned Jewish family, there wasn't any chumminess, any baseball chumminess, you know. We did what [Father] told us and we admired him greatly and as the years went by I appreciated him more and more.… Intimacy in our early years didn't exist in an old Jewish home, but I always loved him. But I learned to appreciate and admire him as the years went by.[34]

He spoke of his father and his father's learning with great respect and reverence, calling him "a wonderful word man" who knew the Torah with a thoroughness that is now lost. When Freehof would visit him in Baltimore in his father's later years, his father would have him turn his back and open a *Humash* and read just the cantillation of a few words, and from humming the cantillation his father would then tell him the words and their location. In his taped interview he can be heard repeating admiringly and longingly, "This is the old-fashioned learning." With that kind of an example before him, it is not surprising that he placed great value on learning by memory and on acquiring an encyclopedic range of knowledge, or that he had the ability to do so.

Freehof's recollections of his mother stressed her piety, devotion, and warmth. Once, he recalled, when he came home from HUC during his student years, he was telling his father about a midrash they had studied from Jellinek's collection *Bet ha-Midrasch*, as they stood beside the bedside of his mother, who was ill. Isaac Freilichoff was not familiar with that midrash, but Golda interrupted her son to finish telling it, because she knew it from the *Tzena Urena*, which she read every Shabbat. Yet even while he praised her, he managed to make it sound both stereotypical and condescending:

> [T]he pious women read that every Shabbes—my mother knew this rare midrash! Isn't it interesting, what the old-fashioned Jewish women knew, God knows.… They read piously, simply, sweet women, you know, without sophistication, with only a knowledge of life.[35]

His parents, Freehof said, taught him to value family unity and Jewish unity, "a feeling it's normal and wonderful to be a Jew.… [This was] not taught verbally but environmentally." He grew up "deeply and automatically Jewish," as was equally true in many immigrant homes. In his home all of traditional Jewish life was piously observed,

> though I must admit that outside of the home certain relaxations began to occur: observance of the Sabbath, putting on the *tefillin* when you could not do it sometimes … not my father, God forbid, but the children.[36]

At least some of their home life showed Chabad influence; many years later Freehof recalled that as a boy he used to receive five pennies on the fifth night of Hanukkah, a Chabad custom that celebrates the Alter Rebbe's release from prison in St. Petersburg on the fifth night of Hanukkah in 1819.[37] Despite those warm and rosy reminiscences, however, Freehof never doubted that he had made the right decision in leaving behind a life that he believed had no chance of survival in the modern world.

His siblings' Jewish paths varied. Ada married and had a family, and they affiliated with a Conservative congregation. Freehof's other sisters, who never wed, remained Orthodox. Jane became a teacher at the Isaac Davidson Hebrew School and a librarian at the Baltimore Hebrew College (now Baltimore Hebrew University). Fannie, who changed her first name to Faye, had a heart condition that left her somewhat frail; she did not hold a regular job but lived at home and wrote stories and plays of Jewish content. Esther was an elementary school teacher at Baltimore's P.S. 59 for many years. After their father's death they occasionally turned to their brother with halakhic questions, but while the tone of the answers is affectionate, it is clear from the content that the religious differences were significant.[38]

The three sisters lived at home with their parents and then with their father after he was widowed, apparently remaining in the family house after his later

remarriage and death. After Faye's death, Jane and Esther moved to an apartment and then to a nursing home.[39]

Freehof was closest to Louis, his youngest sibling, possibly because Louis was the only one who followed him into the Reform movement. Louis studied law and then worked as a government arbiter giving franchises to bus lines. During World War II he worked for the JWB serving Jewish soldiers on army bases. Afterward, he became the executive secretary of Temple Emanu-El in San Francisco and then head of San Francisco's Jewish funeral home. When Louis was a funeral director he sent numerous questions to Freehof, which accounts for a disproportionately large number of Freehof's published Reform responsa dealing with the handling of bodies, conduct of funerals, or inquiries concerning funeral and burial customs.

Upon arriving in America, eleven-year-old Solomon was presumably immediately enrolled in the local public school and in the Talmud Torah, the east Europeans' premier achievement in Baltimore.[40] In 1889, some unknown individuals in East Baltimore had founded the Hebrew Free School Society to educate immigrant boys whose parents were too poor to pay a *melamed*. By 1898, 270 boys were enrolled in the school, which had become known simply as the Talmud Torah, a supplementary school at which students attended classes Sunday mornings and Monday through Thursday afternoons or evenings. Although strictly Orthodox, the school was progressive in its outlook and pedagogy, with a six-year curriculum including classes in Jewish history and Hebrew grammar. Boys in the upper classes attained sufficient fluency to study Mishnah, Talmud, and Shulhan Arukh. By the time Freehof was a student there, the language of instruction was English, not Yiddish. Extracurricular activities included a Hebrew club, Young Judea clubs, dramatics, and more. Shabbat evening and morning services drew a large number of students and their families; the better students led the services. Following the Shabbat morning service there was a story hour for the younger children and a Talmud *shiur* (lesson) for the older ones. From time to time the board of directors held public examinations at which a few students, selected by the teachers, would answer questions based on their classes in Bible, Jewish history, or Hebrew grammar. Although none of the available literature on the Talmud Torah states explicitly what the age range of its students was, the fact that its first graduating class, in 1914, consisted of twelve eighth-grade boys suggests that students generally graduated at around age fourteen or fifteen. Assuming that there was not much change in the school's structure over the previous decade, Solomon Freilichoff was probably a student at the Talmud Torah from his arrival in 1903 through 1907 or 1908.

Uptown Jews assisted the Talmud Torah with both funding and personal effort. Rabbi Schepsel Schaffer supervised its curriculum, and Rabbi William Rosenau of the moderate Reform Oheb Shalom Congregation served on its

board. Schaffer, born in Russian Kurland in 1862, was the perfect bridge between the uptown and downtown Jews of Baltimore. A native German speaker from the Pale of Settlement, he had been educated at both the finest universities and the finest yeshivot. He held a doctorate from the University of Leipzig and rabbinic ordination from both the Berlin Rabbinerseminar and from Rabbi Isaac Elhanan Spector of Kovno.[41] Rosenau had grown up amid what he later termed "intelligent Orthodox influences" in Europe and America; as an adolescent in Philadelphia he had the opportunity to know Samuel Hirsch, Marcus Jastrow, and Sabato Morais, all of whom contributed to his education.[42] He was ordained in 1889 at HUC and, after three years in Omaha, Nebraska, he succeeded Benjamin Szold at Oheb Shalom Congregation, remaining until his death in 1943.[43] Though solidly in the Reform camp, Rosenau firmly resisted radical trends in both thought and praxis, as did his congregation. In the early years of the twentieth century, when Solomon Freilichoff first encountered Reform Judaism at Oheb Shalom, the congregation was still more traditionally observant than most Reform congregations. Men still covered their heads at services (with hats, of course, not skullcaps), most members of the congregation observed the dietary laws, and many walked to synagogue on the Sabbath.[44]

Rosenau was deeply concerned for the welfare of the east European Jews of East Baltimore. Indeed, in 1909, he told his congregation that one of the reasons he had decided to stay with them and not accept a pulpit elsewhere was his desire to deal with the problems of a coastal city like Baltimore, especially its immigrant community.[45] His involvement with the Talmud Torah was part of that concern, but it also had another motivation: He recruited candidates for HUC from among its graduates. As Hymen Saye, a Talmud Torah alumnus, later recalled,

> At graduation time some of the best Talmud students and their parents were persuaded by Rabbi William Rosenau, the dean of the Baltimore Reform rabbinate, to leave Baltimore and enroll in the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati to prepare for a career in the Reform rabbinate. The prospect of their sons receiving a free college education and an honorable calling was a deciding factor in the parents' answer to Rabbi Rosenau.[46]

Ironically, although Freehof had the most distinguished career of the Talmud Torah alumni whom Rosenau sent off to HUC, he was not among those whom Rosenau actively recruited. The initiative was Freehof's. He later recalled that he and his friend Jacob Tarshish, whose father taught at the Talmud Torah, approached the Reform rabbi about the possibility of studying for the rabbinate:

> If I will tell you [how I came to be a Reform rabbi], you'll think that the psalmist was right when he said, *shegios mi yovin*, "How can you account for

> accidents?"[47] Tarshish and I wanted perhaps to be engineers, and we went to register, after we graduated from public school, went to register in high school. We went first to the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute. And there was such a long line of registrants that we lost heart, and went instead to the Baltimore Civic College, the general college, and enrolled there. So thereupon we decided we would not be engineers. And then, how we came to Rosenau— The Talmud Torah that we went to was rather modern; perhaps that was it. It was a jump.… In fact, Rosenau said, why don't we go to the Jewish Theological Seminary. He knew the kind of background we came from. And why we went to him—Look, I can't recover that anymore.…[48]

In another interview, Freehof explained that he and Tarshish thought that since they were going to go to Baltimore City College, they should obtain a classical education by adding to it studies with Rosenau.[49] Still, there is a vast chasm between studying with Rosenau and deciding to enter HUC, and how Freehof crossed it remained a mystery, even to his widow Lillian. One is left with the impression that he had so thoroughly closed the door on his own traditional upbringing that he made himself forget his process of transition away from it. It is possible that the incentive of a subsidized college education was a factor in his decision; under Solomon Schechter, the Jewish Theological Seminary's (JTS) rabbinical school had become a graduate program, admitting students without a Bachelor of Arts degree only under exceptional circumstances,[50] while HUC still sent its rabbinic students to UC to obtain the bachelor's.

Freehof recalled that the two youths were surprised when Rosenau replied to them, "Come next Monday and I'll begin to teach you."[51] They studied with him for two years and then entered the Collegiate Department of HUC in the fall of 1910.[52] Freehof remembered Rosenau, "the first non-Eastern Jew in our life," as "a real Germanic taskmaster" who taught him how to study thoroughly and who examined him on what he had learned in Cincinnati when he came home to Baltimore every summer.

One may certainly wonder what Isaac and Golda Freilichoff thought of their son's preference for this alien thing called Reform Judaism. Freehof insisted that his father was open-minded and allowed his children to pursue their Jewish commitments in their own ways, and that the transition from Orthodoxy to Reform was not difficult for him because Rosenau, like his father, was a scholar and loved learning. He claimed that his father had no expectations or preferences as to what he should be, never expressed any doubts about his son's chosen path as a Reform rabbi, and once even came to hear him when he preached at Oheb Shalom. "I don't think that father was too much enamored of Orthodox *rabbonim*," Freehof recalled. "I think he had certain dubieties about them, particularly in America.… They wanted me to be a good Jewish boy, that's all."[53]

HUC Student Days

In August 1910 Dr. Kaufmann Kohler, president of HUC, received the following letter from an eager candidate for admission:

> Dear Sir,
>
> I have been taking lessons for some time from Dr. William Rosenau of Baltimore, Md. I think Dr. Rosenau has communicated with you, and informed you what ground we have covered in Hebrew. I will arrive in Cincinnati on the evening of Monday September 5, 1910. Please inform me whether the Hebrew Union College building will then be open.
>
> Yours very truly
>
> Solomon B. Frelechoff
> 117 S. Exeter St
> Baltimore Md.[54]

HUC, Isaac Mayer Wise's dream of a seminary to train rabbis for "American Israel," had opened in the fall of 1875 in a synagogue basement with a staff of two—Wise and an assistant—and a student body of fourteen adolescent boys, most of whom had little interest in learning. Wise designed an ambitious eight-year curriculum: four years in the Preparatory Department while the students studied at a Cincinnati high school, and then four years of study for ordination in the Collegiate Department while they simultaneously obtained their bachelor's degrees from UC.[55] Most of the students at the College prior to 1900 came with little Jewish education; they were largely

> from poor families of German origin in the Midwest and South or … the wards of Jewish orphanages. Well-to-do Jewish parents would not hear of their sons entering a profession which was for the most part poorly paid and lacking in prestige.… For serious students, Wise was forced to turn to those families for whom the tuition-free education offered by the Hebrew Union College in conjunction with high school and university studies provided an opportunity they could not otherwise afford.[56]

By 1900, although numerous prosperous Reform congregations needed rabbis whose salary and prestige had risen commensurate with the social status of the laity, only a small number of students of German Jewish background were attracted to the rabbinate. From 1900 on, the HUC student body became largely "Russian," as it was recognized that the College was an excellent vehicle of upward mobility for a Jewishly committed son of the ghetto.

Kaufmann Kohler had become HUC's president in 1903. For most of his eighteen-year administration he ruled the College and its faculty with an iron hand, until age and illness enfeebled him. His mandate was to rebuild the

school's faculty, student body, and reputation, all of which had greatly fallen off in the three years since Wise's death. Kohler's challenge was that New York's JTS had just acquired a great scholar and dynamic leader, Dr. Solomon Schechter, as its head, and even many leading Reform Jews on the East Coast were inclined to support JTS rather than HUC. With the support of the board, Kohler set about placing HUC on firm financial footing and expanding the faculty.[57]

In Kohler, HUC acquired a leader with a far more narrowly sectarian viewpoint than Wise. The Cincinnati Reform laity who dominated the Board of Governors were pleased with his intention to revamp the curriculum to make it reflect much more clearly a Reform perspective. The board also supported his vision of the College as an institution to train rabbis for Reform pulpits, not scholars of Judaica or rabbis for more traditional settings. In addition to extending the Collegiate Department to five years, adding a year of rabbinical study after the Bachelor of Arts degree to upgrade the quality of the students and their education, he also eliminated Modern Hebrew from the curriculum and reduced the amount of Talmud.[58] Ironically, however, by the time he had reformed the College to his satisfaction, his vision was already outdated; though his younger contemporaries largely held fast to his version of Reform, the very students who were most consistently and rigidly exposed to it were the ones who, as rabbis, moved away from classical Reform and sent the movement heading back toward a greater identification with Jewish tradition and the rest of the Jewish community.

By 1903, HUC desperately needed a new facility. The mansion in an elegant German Jewish neighborhood that had served as the College's home since 1880 was now an inadequate, decaying structure in an increasingly run-down, semi-industrial area populated by poor African-Americans and east European Jews.[59] Middle- and upperclass Cincinnatians had moved to suburbs such as Avondale, on the heights north of the central city basin; UC, too, had recently moved to a spacious campus near Burnet Woods. In 1903, the College's Board of Governors bought a tract of land near UC but then had to struggle for several years to raise sufficient funds for construction. In the fall of 1912, at the beginning of Freehof's third year, the College finally relocated to its new buildings on Clifton Avenue, "the promised land on the hill," as Tarshish wrote, only half-jokingly.[60]

The move added enormously to the morale of students and faculty alike and imparted to the school an atmosphere of gravitas that apparently had been lacking. The students had been a high-spirited bunch prone to playing practical jokes, especially the younger boys in the Preparatory Department.[61] In the old building, noted Tarshish, study was "irregular" because "to get a book from the library one had to hunt into the inner recesses of the building."[62] Simon Cohen, one of Freehof's contemporaries, wrote that as a result of the move,

> the care-free, easy-going life that was characteristic of my first year gradually changed to a more studious discipline. The merry parties downtown gradually diminished and were finally succeeded by other festivities.[63]

Cohen recalled that one local establishment where rabbinic students had gathered near the old building offered a free lunch but, he reassured his readers, the students never had much money so they managed to eat more than they drank.[64] After the move, "the institution became more of a real college, and everyone gained, because of it, greater prestige and respect." Additionally, the move eased student life by eliminating the two hours they spent daily commuting downtown from and to their Avondale boardinghouses.

Jerome Mark, who entered HUC in 1913, a year after the new campus's opening, later recalled that

> Solomon B. Freehof, who … was just beginning his Junior year at the College, assumed the *mitzvah* of introducing several freshmen to the institution. We walked up the long flight of stone steps leading to the campus on the hill, stood in awe before the two structures, and then had these words spoken to us by one who was destined for rare prominence as professor, scholar, and leader: "This is the Hebrew Union College. Sura and Pumbeditha in all their glory did not have anything to equal these buildings."[65]

We should treat Freehof's grandiloquence with forbearance. His enthusiasm reflected not merely the enormous contrast between the old facility and the new but also a consciousness of the students' status. The sheer bourgeois, Midwestern American comfort of the institution must have been a lesson in and of itself to him and many of his fellow students who had come there from the lower-class immigrant neighborhoods. But beyond the experience of moving to a higher social class was the sense of self these students acquired as members of the Reform movement. In Freehof's student years, Reform had not yet resigned itself to being merely one branch of Judaism among several. The movement's leaders still considered "Reform Judaism" and "American Judaism" to be synonymous. As America was, in its own estimation, the vanguard of progress and civilization, so Reform leaders from Wise onward considered their community as "American Israel," the vanguard of Judaism, the world's most progressive religion. The students of HUC were the future leaders of the vanguard of Judaism in the modern world, and their new buildings, therefore, were not merely the modern equivalent of the Babylonian academies; they were their superior, simply *because* they were modern.

When Freehof entered HUC in the fall of 1910, its newly expanded full-time faculty consisted of Ephraim Feldman, an east-European-born autodidact who taught philosophy and Talmud; history and philosophy professor Gotthard Deutsch, a native of Moravia who had been ordained at the *Jüdisch-Theologisches Seminar* in Breslau and held a doctorate from the University of Vienna; Bible

professor Moses Buttenwieser, who had received his doctorate in Bible at Heidelberg; philosophy professor David Neumark, a Galician with ordination from the Berlin *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* and a doctorate from the University of Berlin; Bible professor Julian Morgenstern, a 1902 HUC ordinee who had then earned a doctorate in Semitics at Heidelberg; and Henry Englander, a 1901 HUC ordinee with a doctorate in Semitics from Brown University, who taught biblical exegesis and history in the Preparatory Department.[66] In addition, President Kohler taught the students "catechism," i.e., Reform Judaism as he understood it; homiletics; and apocryphal and Hellenistic literature, not because it was vital to the rabbi but because it was an interest of his.[67] Louis Grossmann, rabbi of Cincinnati's Bene Yeshurun Temple, taught courses in pedagogy for junior and senior rabbinic students, and Boris Bogen, Superintendent of Cincinnati's United Jewish Charities, taught a course on "sociology" (i.e., Jewish philanthropic organizations). Adolph Oko was the school's librarian. David Philipson, a member of the College's first graduating class and rabbi of Bene Israel, Cincinnati's other large Reform temple, had earlier given up his part-time role as instructor of homiletics in favor of a seat on the College's Board of Governors, from where he exercised considerable power over the school.[68]

Freehof later praised Ephraim Feldman, with whom he studied Talmud in his first year at the College, as "a remarkable man" and "a very careful translator."[69] Sadly, Feldman died at the end of that academic year, on the very day he was to have received an honorary doctorate in recognition of his twenty-five years of service on the faculty. To replace him, Kohler hired Jacob Zallel Lauterbach as professor of Talmud. Lauterbach, a native of Galicia, had been ordained at Esriel Hildesheimer's *Rabbiner Seminar für das Orthodoxe Judentum* in Berlin and held a doctorate from the University of Göttingen. He had come to New York in 1903 as a staff member of the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, in which capacity he authored numerous articles. After serving as rabbi of two traditional congregations, he became rabbi of a Reform congregation, a move reflective of his own evolution. From there Kohler brought him to HUC.

By all accounts, the European professors were terrible pedagogues. Deutsch, recollected Jacob Rader Marcus, was "a miserable teacher,"[70] and Freehof, too, asserted that there were student complaints about these men. Rabbi Nathan Perilman later recalled:

> Dr. Jacob Z. Lauterbach, of blessed memory, loved the Talmud, and he loved the Student Body of the Hebrew Union College. It cannot be said, however, that one of the great compulsions of his life was to bring the two together. He early began to suspect the natural incompatibility in the relationship. He attended class with almost the same degree of enthusiasm as did the students.[71]

Freehof, however, put the blame for the problems in Lauterbach's class on the students' lack of background:

> A man who studied, who knew the Talmud as Lauterbach—American boys who could hardly struggle from one line to another—he couldn't believe it, to have such pupils who didn't know much about it.[72]

Despite their poor pedagogical skills, the faculty nevertheless made deep impressions on the students, and many close relationships were formed between them. As Freehof recalled,

> It was not so much the instruction, because these Europeans, I want you to know, were not good teachers. Not one of them. But for some reason they were tremendously able to inspire us. Lauterbach awakened me to rabbinic studies. And Buttenwieser awakened those who were moved by him to a study of the prophets.…[73]

David Neumark was known to be sympathetic to Zionism, despite Kohler's strenuous opposition to it; he had the affection of similarly inclined students, though he carefully kept his sympathies out of the classroom. Henry Englander—American-born and not so much older than his students—was described as "a friendly and worthy help to all the students";[74] Rabbi Victor Reichert later referred to Englander's "beauty of spirit," and Freehof asserted that he was "universally beloved."[75] Despite their difficulties in his class, the students were also fond of Lauterbach, who was younger than the other Europeans and apparently related more easily to the students. He and Neumark, both Galician born, had retained an east European *Yiddishkeit*, despite their German training, which gave them more of a rapport with the increasingly east European student body. The same was true of Freehof when he in turn joined the faculty.[76] Morgenstern was also popular as an instructor, though that popularity vanished when he became president.

Kohler, by contrast, was a distant figure of whom the students stood in awe, though they were inspired and moved by his dynamic preaching.[77] Unlike Neumark, Englander, and Morgenstern, he rarely invited students to his home. Board of Governors member Philipson did invite students to his home, but apparently the invitations did not make up for the fact that the students disliked him because of his "huge ego" and general pretentiousness.[78]

In addition to the faculty and the Cincinnati rabbis, the students were privileged to hear many of the distinguished personalities of their day who came to lecture. Sixty years after the fact, Freehof still recalled the excitement when Stephen S. Wise spoke on campus "and there were some dubieties on the part of Dr. Kohler,"[79] which, given Freehof's penchant for understatement and dislike of controversy, may well mean that there was a heated exchange between the two. Other Jewish figures who spoke at the campus or in the city during

Freehof's years there were Solomon Schechter, Louis Brandeis, Israel Abrahams, Nahum Sokolow, Boris Schatz, Emil G. Hirsch, and Aharon Aaronson.

Classes met in the afternoons from three o'clock until six o'clock, since earlier in the day most students were in class either at a local high school or at UC. On Fridays at five o'clock there was a fifteen-minute chapel service, after which the school day ended.[80] On Saturday mornings the students usually attended services at either Philipson's or Grossmann's congregation; in the afternoon they returned to the College for one additional class hour, a Saturday afternoon chapel service at which an upperclass student or a faculty member preached, and student body meetings.

Kohler intended to create a genuinely religious atmosphere at the College and to mold the students' personalities into suitable rabbinic character. It was he who instituted daily and Kabbalat Shabbat services at the College, in addition to the existing Shabbat afternoon service. At chapel services he frequently spoke to the College body on the issues of the day. As for sermons, he allowed only those that he had seen and approved of in advance. His criteria were not merely homiletical quality but also "the degree of adherence to his own version of Reform." He prohibited the wearing of head coverings and prayer shawls. Students and faculty were required to attend these services, and attendance was taken.[81] Surprisingly, however, it appears that provisions were not necessarily made for the students on Jewish holidays: Marcus's diary reveals the sad fact that he and his fellow boarders had no seder to attend on Passover of 1912.[82]

Kohler's version of Reform was more radical than what Freehof had been exposed to at Oheb Shalom. We can only guess at the culture shock Freehof must have experienced, for there is only one recorded instance in which he himself referred to it. In a 1974 interview he said:

> It was a great shock to us, the first time in the chapel when we had to worship without a hat. I don't know why that's such a—to this day I don't know why. I think because our mothers always warned us, put on your hat when you make a *brokhe* before eating, you know.[83]

Although he found it amusing sixty-three years later, it strains credibility to think that it was an easy change at the time.

We may assume that Freehof arrived safely in Cincinnati on 5 September 1910. He had a week to get settled into his new surroundings, and then on Tuesday and Wednesday of the following week he and the other new students took their placement exams. Although entering students applied for entrance to a given level of the program, the faculty tested them to make sure they were actually up to standard. Graduates of Baltimore Civic College and veterans of two years of study with Rosenau, Freehof and Tarshish applied for admission to the First Collegiate class. They were tested on their ability to translate almost any passage from the Bible on sight and on their knowledge of Mishnah

and of Jewish history. All members of the faculty examined them. Rosenau's preparation sufficed; both young men were admitted unconditionally to the First Collegiate level, though Tarshish was told to brush up on his Hebrew and Aramaic grammar. Since Freehof's entering class was a small group, the students were combined with the Collegiate II class for all coursework over the next four years.

Freehof appears to have kept the same sort of profile as a rabbinic student as he did throughout his later career: a superb scholar and a popular and well-liked individual who steered clear of controversy. According to Abraham Franzblau's calculations, only Marcus and Abraham H. Silver—a "tall and gaunt youth from New York City" who joined Freehof's class in September 1911 and who, by the time he was ordained, had begun calling himself Abba Hillel Silver[84]—compiled higher academic averages among the students who were present in those days.[85] All three were among the senior students who served as instructors in the Preparatory Department in their junior and senior years. As a top student, Freehof had no problem receiving financial aid, for which students were required to maintain a certain grade average. He and Silver dominated their years academically, capturing virtually all of the academic honors. In 1915 Silver won the Alumni Prize (a set of the *Jewish Encyclopedia*) for his essay on "The Am-Ha-aretz in Sopheric and Tannaitic Times," while in 1914 Freehof had won the Kaufmann Kohler Prize, worth $100, for his essay, "The Origin and History of the Haftarah." Neither of these were papers written for classes; rather, they were extensive pieces of research done beyond the ordinary course load. In the case of the Kohler Prize, at least, the faculty had selected the topic. Silver was named valedictorian of their graduating class; Freehof was elected to Phi Beta Kappa at the University of Cincinnati.[86]

Like all HUC students, Freehof conducted High Holy Day services in small congregations, beginning in 1912 in Saginaw, Michigan. The congregation was pleased with him and sent a letter of commendation to the College; later that year they asked that he be sent to them again the following year, a request to which the College acceded.[87] Apparently he distinguished himself as a preacher from the start. After two years in Saginaw he was assigned to Cairo, Illinois, in 1913, when that congregation specifically complained that the 1912 student rabbi had been a poor preacher and they wanted a good one.[88]

In 1914–1915, his senior year, Freehof served the congregation in Portsmouth, Ohio. Beginning in the previous academic year, the faculty had limited student pulpits to students already possessing a bachelor's degree (i.e., mostly seniors) and limited the students to no more than biweekly visits to give them more time for their studies.[89] The congregation in Portsmouth, like many student pulpits through the years, had a history of taking up more of a student rabbi's time than the College wanted its students to give.[90] Freehof, like many

rabbinic students through the years, was eager to comply and tried his best to convince the faculty to make an exception for him. He was not successful.[91]

In addition to compiling a superb academic record, Freehof was active in student affairs. As a UC sophomore in 1911–1912, he captained the school's debating team. At HUC he played a prominent role in the student organization and was elected student body president in his senior year. As president he officiated over the students' opening banquet, which was marked by the sort of rituals typical of colleges and universities in that era. The *HUC Monthly*, a student literary journal founded in 1914, reported that the senior class representative formally welcomed the freshman class, the freshman representative responded, someone sang "the traditional Etz Chaim" with the accompaniment of the freshmen, and then

> the chairman [Freehof] declared that the Freshmen are now part and parcel of the student body.… Praised be the chairman! He surely knew how to keep our interest throughout, for he kept two of the guests of the evening, Rabbi Lee Levinger ['14] of Paducah, Ky., and Prof. Julian Morgenstern of the Hebrew Union College, unto the very last.[92]

Freehof also took an active part in the Literary Society, the students' chief venue for discussing the political, cultural, and intellectual trends of the day. An average of twenty-five students (out of a student body of eighty to ninety) met every other Friday night to discuss contemporary issues. Founded in 1911 by Morris Lazaron (class of 1914), it was originally a Friday night gathering at the Lazaron family's home, but it became such an important part of student life that the following year it became an official College activity, meeting in the student room at HUC. In the beginning the society was a haphazard group that would sometimes feature a speaker or a student paper, but by its third year of existence it had grown into a well-organized program of speakers, papers delivered by students, formal debates between students, and holiday events. Freehof served as president of the Literary Society during the 1913–1914 academic year. In that year the group heard papers on ritual murder,[93] modern homiletics, and Hasidism; hosted a guest speaker on "Jews and Medicine;" held a Hanukkah celebration; and sponsored debates on "The Sunday Sabbath Question," "That the Problems of the Jews in Russia Can Best Be Solved in Russia," and "The Synagogue as Social Center."[94] The first issue of the *HUC Monthly* noted,

> If there is any subject of current Jewish interest, be it the question of teaching Hebrew in our Sabbath-schools or the question of Sunday services, or the like, the boys expect to hear it discussed in the Literary Society and to help discuss it.[95]

Freehof's extracurricular life had a lighter side as well, of which we can catch glimpses in the diaries of Jacob Rader Marcus. Four years younger than

Freehof, Marcus entered the College's Preparatory Department in 1911. His diary begins with his second semester at HUC in January 1912; one day the following month he noted that he "went with Sol Freehof and got some cakes."[96] A love of sports was clearly part of what drew these two together. Apparently neither of them possessed great athletic prowess; rather, they were loyal fans of the College's baseball and basketball teams. Freehof's dedication extended to being elected manager of the baseball team in the student body elections of spring 1912. They also shared outstanding academic ability and a wide-ranging intellectual curiosity but could behave like more ordinary students as well: Marcus's diary notes that in March 1914 he "[g]ot up 7.10. Cut German with Sol Freehof and went to gym.… First deliberate cut I ever made."[97]

Because Freehof saved no personal correspondence, we must rely on other people's testimony to know who his friends were at HUC. The personal correspondence of Elkan Voorsanger (class of 1914) shows that he and Freehof were close friends, at least through the 1930s. Because of the College's practice of combining small classes, they would have taken all of their courses together for four years. Sports probably also drew them together: Voorsanger pitched for the HUC baseball team. In many ways, however, they must have made an unlikely pair. Voorsanger was the son of a distinguished Reform rabbi of Dutch origin in San Francisco, his academic record was quite mediocre, he was known on campus as a practical joker, and he was an activist, not a scholar.[98] The evidence of their friendship lies in a collection of letters from the 1930s by Freehof to Voorsanger and his wife, Henrietta. The correspondence reveals that the Voorsangers were apparently the only nonfamily members invited to Freehof's wedding to Lillian Simon in 1934 and also that Freehof gave the Voorsangers a substantial amount of money in the early years of the Depression, which they accepted as a loan and eventually repaid. At that time Freehof, still a bachelor, received a handsome salary as rabbi of Kehilath Anshe Mayriv Congregation in Chicago, while Voorsanger was struggling in an organizational position.[99]

Barnett Brickner (class of 1919) and James G. Heller (class of 1916) were also friends of Freehof from their student days on. In later years Freehof and Brickner exchanged pulpits regularly; on visits the two men would sit together for hours, smoking Havana cigars, drinking brandy, and telling stories.[100] In addition to these fellow students, Professor Jacob Z. Lauterbach, Freehof's mentor, became a lifelong friend.[101] In their later years, Freehof and Silver enjoyed a collegial friendship, but there is no evidence that they were friends as students or young rabbis. During World War II and afterward they worked together closely in the CCAR; Freehof was Silver's vice-president in 1941–1943 and then succeeded him as president, and they collaborated at other times as well. The two also exchanged pulpits annually in the postwar years. Silver was the guest preacher at Freehof's seventieth birthday celebration, and Freehof did the same for Silver. Silver, unlike Freehof, had few, if any, real friends. As his

biographer documents and others confirm, he was an extraordinarily gifted but quite egotistical individual.[102] Freehof's recollections emphasized Silver's differences from the rest of the student body, including himself.

Age of Controversy

The hot issue of the day during Freehof's student and early faculty years at the College was Zionism. It was discussed in the Literary Society and everywhere else on campus. During the 1911–1912 academic year, Silver and Professor Neumark had founded a Hebrew-speaking club, Ibriah, of which Marcus was a member, though he does not mention whether Freehof was also.[103]

The CCAR had taken a firm stance against Zionism as early as 1897, although individual rabbis were outspoken Zionists.[104] Kohler was a committed anti-Zionist.[105] Nevertheless, despite his best efforts, between 1910 and 1920 the student body gradually shifted to an overwhelmingly pro-Zionist perspective as its demographics changed, world events furthered the Zionist cause, and Louis Brandeis popularized a nonideological Zionism acceptable to American Jews, including many Reform Jews.[106]

During Freehof's senior year, controversy erupted between the students and Kohler when the latter rescinded the Literary Society's invitation to Horace Kallen to speak at the College. Kallen, a secular cultural Zionist remembered today chiefly as the originator of the term "cultural pluralism," had been publicly critical of the Reform movement's position on Zionism.[107] Kohler's triumph was a pyrrhic victory, however. Although the Board of Governors supported his actions in this matter, some powerful rabbis did not. Max Heller, Stephen S. Wise, and others were able to prevail on the Board of Governors to force Kohler to agree that henceforward he could not prohibit sermons and speeches on Zionism.[108]

For a few years during the 1910s, controversy also swirled around a Zionist fraternity at HUC. Information about this group is incomplete and contradictory, but it appears that its leaders were Heller and Brickner and that it had some connection to Nathan Isaacs, professor of law at UC. Isaacs, the son of a distinguished Cincinnati family, was a Zionist and was committed to restoring aspects of traditional practice to Reform Judaism. The fraternity was known among the students by the Hebrew letters יבת which, using the *at-bash* method,[109] signified the letters מלא, the acronym of מי ליי אלי, "Whoever is for the Eternal, to me! (Ex. 32:26)." Moses's rallying cry at the time of the sin of the Golden Calf became the motto of this group, whose members pledged themselves to abstain from pork and shellfish, to marry within the faith, and "positively to observe holidays and the Sabbath in appropriate ways."[110] The group met biweekly; members would sometimes present papers for discussion. Balfour Brickner, Barnett Brickner's son, confirmed that the fraternity was Zionist in orientation and committed to strengthening traditional observance in Reform Judaism.[111]

According to Brickner, the leading Zionists at HUC in those days were his father, Heller, Silver, and Freehof, all of whom were members of the fraternity. However, Marcus's diary, which contains several references to the fraternity, makes no mention of either Silver or Freehof in connection with it and, in fact, indicates conclusively that Freehof was not a member. He first mentions the group in March 1914:

> There is a Jewish Frat organized at college which is trying to run everything; they have about fifteen fellows who are becoming snobbish. Ed Israel & Davis were just admitted. I bet you they won't run the HUC elections. We are forming a strong opposition.[112]

The next day Marcus noted that another student had just joined the fraternity and again opined that its goal was to control the student elections. "Jim Heller, I believe, is the main Macher." Then in May 1914 came the election. "Student body elections. We all thot [sic] that יבת would fight. They did till they saw they were beaten. Freehof was [elected] President."[113]

It is not surprising that Freehof was not a member of the יבת. There is no doubt that his sympathies were with the Zionists, but it was simply not his nature to be an activist—neither as a student nor in later life. While his close friends—Voorsanger, Heller, Brickner, and even Marcus in his own way—were men who relished taking a strong stand, Freehof was a conciliator. He preferred consensus and compromise to controversy, no matter what the issue and who the disputants. That is not to say that he shirked controversy; he could express himself quite strongly when he felt that key issues were at stake. But by temperament he was not an activist, and he much preferred to find ways for people of disparate views to work together.

Thus, it is not surprising that, while his friends preached their sermons in the College chapel on the issues of the day, he did not.[114] Students delivered sermons in their junior year at the Shabbat afternoon service. Freehof's sermon, on 10 January 1914, was "on the qualities for leader: modesty, toleration, education, idealism" and, noted Marcus, was "not so good as I expected."[115] The sermon has not survived, but even from Marcus's brief note it fits the mold of Freehof's later sermons: solidly rooted in Scripture, appropriate to its context, uplifting, noncontroversial, and sometimes straying into gross platitude. The Torah reading for that Shabbat afternoon, at least according to the traditional lectionary, would have been the opening verses of Exodus, from the weekly portion, Shemot. That portion (Ex. 1:1–6:1) includes the story of Moses's birth, upbringing, flight to Midian, and selection by God as messenger to Pharaoh and agent of liberation. The theme of leadership is such an obvious one for a rabbinical student preaching to other rabbinical students that Freehof would have been hard pressed to avoid clichés. Perhaps he did not avoid them, and that is why his friend Marcus was disappointed.

Freehof took a leading role in one other student endeavor, serving in his senior year as associate editor of the *HUC Monthly*, the student literary journal founded by Silver. Silver was the journal's first editor-in-chief; in addition to Freehof, his other two associate editors for the 1914–1915 year were Heller and Samuel Abrams (class of 1916).[116] The monthly periodical was both an in-house student magazine and a journal of Reform Jewish thought, with subscribers around the country. Its contributors were students, faculty, alumni, and occasionally other figures in the Jewish community.

While most of the journal's first-year issues were unremarkable and free of controversy, one issue contained an article that went to the heart of contemporary discontent among members of the CCAR as to the direction of their movement. In November 1914, the *HUC Monthly* printed an article by Rabbi Max Heller titled "Casuistry in Reform Judaism," in which he called for greater guidance in Reform Judaism on matters of praxis, especially Sabbath observance, and praised the Responsa Committee as a step in the right direction.[117] The article was preceded by an enthusiastically supportive but unsigned editorial:

> Ceremonies are the rhythmic echoes of the inner life of the group. Symbols are ideograms of social activities. The habitual reactions of a people to its environment crystallize themselves into customs. Hence customs must vary with the change in a people's environment and ceremonies must keep pace with the ever-evolving life of the group. This psychological fact underlies the attitude of Reform Judaism to Orthodox insistence upon traditional observances.… But while Reform Judaism has been consistent in the application of this standard to religious practices, it has in many cases been guilty of indifference to practices which can still serve beneficent ends. There has been a decided lack of insistence upon such observances as are still potent to arouse spiritual emotion and enhance communal life and solidarity.…
>
> Reform Judaism seems still to be under the influence of the rationalistic philosophy which attended its birth. We are still too coldly intellectualistic.…
>
> [But we are evolving a] constructive system of religious practice and discipline for both the individual and the community.… Dr. Heller argues for detailed guidance in matters of religious practice, which should be given with the authority of the whole body of Reform Jewish Rabbis.… This is a solution worthy of earnest consideration, for the problem is very real and very pressing.[118]

This editorial foreshadows the interwar discussions of observance in Reform Jewish life, insisting that classical Reform was too quick to abandon practices that could still be meaningful and raising the question of a code or guide to practice. Significantly, it defines ceremonies as "the rhythmic echoes of the inner life of the group" and emphasizes the role of ritual observance in "enhanc[ing] communal life and solidarity." This linkage of ritual observance and group life is quite different from the conception of ceremonies students would have

learned from President Kohler. While not unmindful of the collective aspect of ceremonies, Kohler emphasized their didactic function in deepening the religious life of the individual. Without a doubt, the editorial use of this language reveals the influence of the new social sciences, which affected so many young Jewish intellectuals of Freehof's generation, most notably Mordecai Kaplan and Horace Kallen.

Which of the journal's editors penned the editorial? Silver may well have agreed with it, but it is not likely that he wrote it. Though he served on the Responsa Committee for a number of years and did criticize Reform's abandonment of Jewish practice on several occasions, the reappropriation of ritual was not a major concern of his, and he never advocated a Reform code of observance.[119] Freehof later advocated collecting all Reform responsa and making them available as a guide but was passionately opposed to the creation of an authoritative code of Reform Jewish practice.[120] Almost assuredly the editorial was penned by James Heller, Max Heller's son and a member of the יבת fraternity.

We may safely assume that Freehof, who throughout his long life was a great bibliophile and generously supported the publication of scholarly Judaica, penned at least one editorial that year, "For A College Press." This editorial argued that especially because of the current European war, the United States was becoming the new center of world Jewry. After the war that would mean not only caring for a flood of Jewish immigrants but also becoming the new center of Jewish scholarship and publishing. HUC would have a special task as the main American source for propagating *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. While the Jewish Publication Society was doing an excellent job of popularizing Jewish classics, the College should take upon itself the responsibility of supporting and facilitating scholarship and should, therefore, have its own press, like all major universities. Freehof further noted perspicaciously that the College should have been publishing a "Sabbath School Journal … to crystalize [sic] some of the conflicting theories and to organize some of the contradictory methods of our religious education."[121]

The June 1915 issue of the *HUC Monthly* carried a précis of Freehof's rabbinic thesis, "The Institution of Ordination." The thesis discussed

> the subject of the ordination of Rabbi, setting forth the history of ordination, the manner in which ordination was carried out, the classes of ordination, the laws governing ordination, and the privileges that ordination bestowed."[122]

The thesis is a solid piece of work that demonstrates Freehof's ability to handle rabbinic texts and to evaluate critically the relevant scholarship of the day, most of which was in German.



Freehof in his chaplain's uniform, c. 1918–1919.

(Courtesy Dr. Freehof's niece, Teresa Schwartz)

Rabbi Freehof, Chaplain Freehof

Freehof received his rabbinic ordination in June 1915 and was the first of the College's east European ordinees to join the faculty. As an Instructor in Rabbinics, he was assigned to teach fifteen hours per week in the Preparatory Department. For the D grade (beginning students) he taught two hours each of Pirkei Avot, Exodus, and Mishnah; for the C grade (including the College's future president, Nelson Glueck) two hours of Mishnah; for the B grade two hours of Mishnah and two of Commentaries; and for A grade, one hour per week of Midrash. He was also appointed to some minor faculty committees. In November 1917 he was promoted to Assistant Professor and named faculty adviser to the A grade. By the spring of 1918 he was taking on more weighty faculty roles: serving as co-referee for two rabbinic theses, one with Lauterbach and one with Neumark, and serving as a member of the Committee on Academic Standing. In the fall of 1918 he and Julian Morgenstern examined candidates for admission.

Judging from a letter from Voorsanger to him, Freehof was very happy as a member of the faculty.

> 13 January 1916
>
> Dear Professor:–
>
> I wish you to know that I am not used to having people write me on common yellow paper. I expect at least bankers' bond or something equally inexpensive, but yellow paper is too rich for my blood, especially since that kind of paper only costs a dollar a thousand.
>
> I am glad to know that you are working hard. Its [sic] good for a lazy loafer like you. I am only sorry that I am not in Cincinnati to sit and laugh at you or make faces at you from the distance.
>
> Young Man, I am going to quote you. You say faculty meetings are fun but I can't write about them to you. Don't you try to put on any high and mighty airs with me, or I will come right over to Cincinnati and give you a poch and a good old fashioned mackkes.…[123]

In 1916 Freehof began to keep a record of marriages he performed. He labeled and dated the opening page in Hebrew in elegant traditional style:

> Record book of marriages performed by the youth Zalman Dov son of Reb Yitzhak Tzvi, called Freehof, from today, the first day of the week of the weekly portion *Tetzaveh*, the 9th day of the month of Adar I in the year 5676.

He then added in English the date Sunday, February 13, 1916.[124] Most of the first fifteen entries, spanning his HUC years and his first year in Chicago, include the Hebrew date; after 1925 he listed only the common date. The format of each entry remained consistent: numbered entries by date listed in English *Bride's Name* of *City* and *State* (sometimes age in parentheses) married to *Groom's Name* of *City* and *State* at *Location*. He also noted in Hebrew whether the bride or groom was divorced or a convert. The first four entries, all in 1916, were women from his student pulpit in Portsmouth.

While the faculty minutes from Freehof's first two years on staff reveal little out of the ordinary in the day-to-day life of the College, in fact faculty and students alike were increasingly consumed by news of the European war, particularly its negative impact on the Jews of Russia and on the Yishuv, who were subject to harsh measures by the Ottoman rulers. A half-page notice in the January 1915 *HUC Monthly* proclaimed starkly:

> More than a quarter of a million Jews are in the ranks of the various European armies.
>
> More than half of all the Jews in the world are in the war zone.
>
> Five million Jews are in the so-called Pale of Settlement along the Prussian and Austrian frontier. Their industries are paralyzed; their homes devastated; families are starving.
>
> At Nickelsburg, Moravia, seven hundred local Jews, though poor themselves, are caring for six thousand Jewish refugees.
>
> One hundred thousand Jews in Palestine are entirely cut off from the world. Their fruit and wine crops, excluded from European markets, remain to rot.
>
> Tens of thousands of babies have been born and will be born under these direful conditions. How many of them will die this winter depends on us in America.[125]

American Reform Jews generally favored President Wilson's early policy of neutrality, but, like the majority of their fellow citizens, they supported his declaration of war in April 1917 "to make the world safe for democracy" and were eager to demonstrate their loyalty by fighting for their country.[126] Cincinnati's weekly Jewish newspaper, *The American Israelite*, which at that time was still essentially the house organ of the Reform movement, reveals a Jewish community caught up in the patriotic fervor of the day. From April 1917, for example, the paper featured articles on what the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) was doing around the country for the war effort and published the

names of local enlistees. Many members of the College community who were of military age responded with enthusiasm, including Freehof, who was one of the first rabbis to volunteer for chaplaincy duty. In January 1918 the *HUC Monthly* noted with pride that ten students, the equivalent of 39 percent of the student body of military age, had now enlisted and that students from the upper classes were holding services for Jewish soldiers at a nearby military base.[127]

Although by one estimate Jews constituted 6 percent of the military in the years just prior to the United States' entry into the war,[128] the military had no provision for Jewish chaplains. Chaplains were assigned based on the majority faith in each regiment, meaning Jews and small Protestant denominations were not served. When the United States entered the war, representatives of various Jewish organizations, religious and secular, met in New York and established the JWB to provide for the needs of Jews in the military. They recruited civilian rabbis and laypeople for immediate work in military camps and lobbied Congress to allow for Jewish military chaplains. When Jewish chaplains were finally authorized six months after the outbreak of war, the JWB created a Committee on Chaplains, representing the entire spectrum of American Judaism, to "receive, consider, and make recommendations in regard to all applications on the part of Rabbis for Chaplaincies."[129] There were at the time approximately 400 English-speaking rabbis in the United States, 150 of whom volunteered to serve. Of those 150, the JWB endorsed 34, and 23 were eventually commissioned. However, 100,000 Jewish soldiers were in France, and only 12 Jewish chaplains were actually sent over.[130]

Freehof was called up in October 1918, a year after he volunteered, and received his commission on 1 November 1918.[131] He and James Heller, the last two Jewish chaplains to arrive in France, shipped out of New York on 12 November, the day after the Armistice.[132] The details of Freehof's military career are lost because his service record was among those destroyed in a fire at a military records center in the 1970s, but we can compile a fairly good picture of what his responsibilities were. Chaplains were sent to a training school before receiving their commissions. In addition to conducting religious services and performing pastoral duties, they were commonly expected to assist in a variety of tasks: planning entertainment to maintain troop morale, registering graves, visiting the wounded, censoring mail, helping soldiers to write letters home, participating in General Pershing's campaign to stop the spread of sexually transmitted diseases in the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF),[133] and more. We know that upon arrival in France he was assigned to First Army Headquarters, which was getting ready to receive thousands of destitute individuals, including released prisoners of war. Freehof may well have been asked to assist in processing these men. We also know from his marriage record book that in March 1919 he officiated at a soldier's wedding in Paris.[134]

At some point during the winter of 1919, Freehof was transferred to the Army of Occupation in Germany, as was Chaplain Israel Bettan. The two men's friendship probably dates from this period. The occupying soldiers had far too much time on their hands and far too little to do, so in January 1919 the Army launched a massive educational program for the troops, including basic literacy, vocational training, academic classes, and the arts. Chaplains were frequently a part of this program, though it is possible that because there were so few Jewish chaplains, serving such a scattered constituency, they were already busy enough to be exempt from such duties.[135]

On 28 May 1919, Chaplains Bettan and Freehof received orders to report to St. Aignan, France, for return to the United States, though neither of them actually embarked until early July. Bettan used the time to visit England, but Freehof was otherwise occupied. Dr. Walter Jacob, Freehof's assistant and successor at Rodef Shalom Congregation in Pittsburgh, recalls that Freehof used to tell a story about that time. In the racially segregated military, African-Americans were largely limited to service as enlisted men in supply units. For some weeks while waiting to embark, Chaplain (First Lieutenant) Freehof was assigned command of an African-American unit that was without officers for some reason. He preached for these troops at their church services each Sunday morning and learned a number of spirituals from them, which he remembered and sang for the rest of his life.[136]



Original studio photo of Freehof taken by J.D. Toloff.
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

Professor Freehof

Discharged from the Army on 5 July 1919 after less than a year of active duty,[138] Freehof returned that fall to an appreciative student body at HUC. *HUC Monthly* wrote,

> We hail with joy and pleasure the return of Sol Freehof to the halls and walls of our Alma Mater. "Sol," as we upper classmen love to call him (cavette [sic], Freshmen) just got back from France, where he was a chaplain with the AEF. We all missed Sol during the past year, but we are tickled to death to have him back with us. Boruch Habo Beshem Adonoi. A year of joy and peace, of good fellowship to you, Sol, our colleague and our teacher.[137]

Back at HUC, emotions were running high as an aging President Kohler's control of the institution was slipping and students and faculty were caught up in the issues of the day. Morgenstern had written to Bettan the previous spring that it had been "a negative and dissatisfying year" at the College. The school had been closed for eight weeks in the fall semester due to the influenza epidemic. Most of the students who went into the service were now back, "but an unfortunate spirit of unrest, bordering on Bolshevism has gotten hold of the boys, due undoubtedly largely to the war, and social reaction thereto."[139] Zionist sentiment among the students was stronger than ever, reflecting the movement's phenomenal growth among American Jews during and immediately following the war.

Freehof was a popular instructor at HUC. The students liked him and appreciated his presence not only for his *Yiddishkeit* but also because he was close to their own age and shared many of their interests and amusements. The tone of comments about him in the *HUC Monthly* was always one of affectionate teasing, as in, "Dr. Freehof toured the West in addition to delivering a course of lectures in San Francisco. Even his vocabulary fails him when he attempts to speak of the wonders of the sights he saw."[140] He continued to be a loyal attendee at HUC basketball and baseball games and in 1920 was named faculty adviser on all matters pertaining to athletics, including expenditures. Regular and amusing notes in 1923–1924 issues of *HUC Monthly* reveal that he became an avid ping pong player when the College acquired the equipment.[141]

Jacob Rader Marcus and Freehof dined together regularly and attended sports events; Freehof tutored Marcus in Talmud and liturgy and taught him to play chess. Marcus's occasional notes of their conversations reveal that the two were confidantes. A conversation he recorded about marriage sheds light on how the German—east European split affected young men like Freehof and Marcus, who had crossed the cultural and class divide by coming to HUC:

> Saw Jerry and Sol Freehof at Sol's rooms and we talked marriage. Sol wants to marry a girl who is cultured, educated and good looking and will not wince when a Yiddish word is spoken or when his mother speaks her English brogue. The German Jewish girls have the culture but dislike Russian Jewish boys. We all came to the conclusion that if a boy of Russian descent married a girl of German descent the chances are that she would look down upon him and his family and the marriage would not be successful. Morale [sic]: marry a girl of Russian Jewish descent who may be less cultured but will make your life happier. Sol met a brilliant girl this summer of German descent. She told him she had a wonderful girl for him. Sol ironically asked if she was of Russian descent and his informant answered yes and Sol then murmured maliciously: Good. Is it sour grapes with us. The war did some good with those whose German descent was their obsession.[142]

Like Freehof, Marcus was hired as an instructor in the Preparatory Department immediately after ordination. In 1920–1921, Marcus's first year as a fellow faculty member, a controversy arose at HUC that would give him occasion to be highly critical of Freehof's conduct. The war years' "100 percent Americanism" had paved the way for the postwar Red Scare, culminating in the infamous Palmer Raids of winter 1919–1920. In a pattern that would be repeated after World War II, liberals, including Reform Jews, felt the need to distance themselves from radicals, real or imagined.[143]

In November 1920, Professors Deutsch, Lauterbach, and Freehof were charged by the faculty to form a special committee to investigate two students, Samuel Rosenberg and Ferdinand Isserman, for material they had published in that month's issue of the *HUC Monthly*. Rosenberg, the editor, had written an editorial lampooning Rabbis David Philipson and Louis Grossmann. The committee spoke with the two students and reported back to the faculty. They reminded the faculty that at Philipson's instigation the Board of Governors had already investigated Rosenberg for distributing *The New Age*, a banned Socialist newspaper, on campus. Despite the board's complaint, the faculty had defended Rosenberg, only warning him to desist from such activity because of the harm it could do to the College. The young man apologized and complied, but he continued to be vocal in his own views. When the faculty committee then questioned him concerning the *HUC Monthly*, he offered to resign as editor.

Concerning the charge against Isserman—also known to be a leftist—the committee further reported that, as president of the Literary Society, he had deliberately published in the *HUC Monthly* a list of controversial speakers that the students wished to invite as a way of showing that President Kohler intended to restrict the students' freedom.[144] Isserman denied the charge to the committee, insisting that he had merely put it in as a news item and had tried to take it out but was too late. The faculty committee's comment on this was,

> Your Committee is of the opinion that while from the point of view of Talmudic psychology נכרים דברים שלא אמת, the statement of Isserman does not appear to have been made in good faith, there is no tangible evidence of his having acted in bad faith.[145]

The committee then tabled until the next meeting a motion to have Rosenberg resign or be expelled, and no action was taken concerning Isserman.

At the next faculty meeting, it was moved to expel the two students; votes were taken separately and each failed, four to five. With the exception of Marcus, all present attached explanations of their votes to the minutes. Englander explained that he thought Rosenberg a better character than Isserman, so after Isserman was retained he would not vote to expel Rosenberg. Deutsch, Neumark, and Buttenwieser appended a statement explaining that in the absence of any real evidence against the students, they could not justify such a harsh penalty.

Grossmann stated kindly that in his opinion these were just boys, and they would grow and change.[146]

Lauterbach, Morgenstern, and Freehof were the three strong negatives. It was Lauterbach who moved that Isserman should be expelled, explaining that a number of little incidents had added up to his being unfit for the rabbinate. He charged that all Isserman cared about were "certain modern ideas of a new social order."[147] Specifically, Lauterbach accused Isserman of offending numerous congregants by criticizing the Palmer Raids in his student High Holy Day sermon; further, when asked about the sermon, Isserman said he had done nothing wrong, but nothing could be proved because he had destroyed the text of the sermon. In addition, Lauterbach accused Isserman of using his position as Literary Society president to embarrass the college by inviting speakers who were advocates of radical ideas and hostile to religion, knowing the College would never consent; and of holding a Society meeting at a church with the pastor as the evening's speaker.

Freehof and Morgenstern supplied quite a harsh statement explaining their votes to expel the two:

> Without going into detail, we state our conviction that these two students have consciously and ceaselessly attempted to undermine the teachings and the work of the Faculty and have been consequently a destructive influence upon other students, especially the younger boys.
>
> We have been kind and patient with these two students through many scrapes. We have done our best to win their friendship and confidence in order to be helpful to them and to arouse in them an interest in Judaism and to develop in them that fine character which is indispensable for a Rabbi. We have failed.
>
> Our duty is first to the College and to Judaism, and only secondarily to individual students. We have given these men a fine education, which should have fitted them well for other work. We wish them well, but we cannot in conscience consent to the ordination as Rabbis of men who have no love for Judaism, no interest in Jewish study, and no confidence in the character and usefulness of the Rabbinate.[148]

The faculty then voted to require all material for the *HUC Monthly* to be submitted first to a faculty advisory committee, a decision that only Marcus and Freehof, both former *HUC Monthly* editors, opposed.

This was not the end of the matter, however, because the Board of Governors stepped in. In January 1921 they notified the faculty that they disapproved of their action concerning the two students and ordered them to suspend the students pending action at a joint board-faculty meeting. The faculty demonstrated a bit of independence by refusing to suspend them, though they explained that this was only because suspension would not remove the two students' presence

from campus, and so there was no point in such an action when definitive action was to be decided soon.[149]

Marcus's account of the joint meeting criticized Freehof in particular:

> [1/22/21:] If [Grossmann] had been present he might have saved the day for the boys.… Neumark and Buttsy fought like tigers for the boys. Lauterbach, Morgenstern and Freehof against.… Freehof made a mistake in my opinion of appealing to anti-socialistic views of board by condemning them as anti-capitalists and the like. Freehof is weak in some respects. He claims to be a socialist yet gives the Board the impression that they are dangerous because economic radicals.… Freehof also made some derogatory statement that he could not prove. I'm a little afraid of that boy.… In final motion that men should be allowed three weeks to resign and then be expelled automatically the ayes were: Englander; J Walter Freiberg; Lauterbach; Freehof; Morgy; (Mack had left) Cohen the Chairman Kohler, Westheimer. Nos: Deutsch and Neumark. Marcus, Seasongood, and Buttenwieser refused to vote altogether because the men had not chance to offer a defense before the Board which was trying them on the word of the faculty.[150]

The controversy created an enormous amount of tension on campus; Freehof's stand apparently brought him some unaccustomed hostility from students. Another entry from Marcus's diary states,

> [1/24/21:] Isserman and I had a chat for a few minutes and he tells me that Seasongood wants to resign from the Board and that he will fight case in the courts and that the boys are not to resign, etc. Freehof goes around with a hang-dog expression. The faculty are nervous. Hell's bells what are they afraid of. They didn't do him an injustice. Freehof is afraid they [the students] will go on a sympathy strike. There isn't enough gutz [sic] in that gang to do anything. There is meeting of the student body tonight but I feel sure that they won't accomplish anything. No courage in that gang. I don't think so. I may be mistaken. Peiser [a student in Freehof's Collegiate I Mishnah class] baited Freehof about the affair. I'd like to hear them say anything to me.[151]

On 25 January a student delegation met with the Board of Governors to plead with them not to expel the two students. Isserman also sent a letter to the board stating that he had been raised from childhood with the idea that he was to go into the rabbinate in memory of his grandfather and that it was all he had ever wanted to do with his life. He begged the board to take no action against him without giving him a hearing. The letter and visit persuaded at least one board member to ask the faculty to suspend the expulsion and to give the two students a hearing. The student association also asked the faculty at their 26 January meeting not to dismiss the two without giving them a chance to face their judges directly. Those faculty members who were present

voted. Lauterbach, Freehof, Englander, and Marcus voted for postponement of further action against the two pending another joint board-faculty meeting; Morgenstern and Buttenwieser voted against. Marcus's diary for that day noted that

> Isserman wrote a letter which I did not read but understood to be a very fine piece of work.… Went to Freehof for the evening and studied Liturgy and Talmud and played a little chess. Freehof said he was very much influenced by what Isserman wrote and may change his whole attitude on the whole affair.

In the end, Rosenberg resigned, but Isserman was allowed to continue.[152]

Freehof's behavior in this affair is uncharacteristically harsh and does not resemble his conduct in any other incident later in his life, even in his conflicts with the American Council for Judaism in the 1940s and 1950s. His initial judgment of Isserman, who had been one of his D Grade students in 1914–1915, was more severe than anything he was later willing to put on paper about the most errant of colleagues. It appears that he was influenced by his mentor Lauterbach and by Morgenstern in this affair; the statement that he and Morgenstern coauthored reveals that the two men shared a sense of what was or was not good for the College.

We should probably see these events as part of the politics leading up to Morgenstern's accession as acting president. In March 1921, just after the conclusion of this incident. Kohler announced his anticipated retirement as president of the College. The question of a successor had been a common topic of gossip for months. In addition to Morgenstern, both Philipson and Rosenau wanted the position.[153] Morgenstern was very popular among the students as well as among the College's many recent alumni. In 1917 he was elected president of the Alumni Association (and Freehof was elected its secretary).[154] His ability to defeat Philipson and Rosenau was due to the strong support and intervention of the alumni, who actively campaigned for him. Morgenstern's supporters on the faculty, according to Marcus, were himself, Freehof, and Lauterbach, though only Lauterbach's support carried any weight.[155] It is possible that the confluence of votes by Lauterbach, Morgenstern, and Freehof in the Rosenberg-Isserman affair reflects that the three shared a common vision of what sort of institution they wanted the College to be and whom they envisioned as its next leader. (Marcus's dissent appears to be a reflection of his own orneriness and a certain cynicism about the College.)[156] From his student days onward Freehof cared deeply about the good name and welfare of the Reform rabbinate and of the institution that produced it. He remained involved in the College's affairs, fending off what he perceived as challenges to its identity or to its supremacy as the institution of Reform rabbinical education.[157] His actions here may be understood as consistent with that record, but it is equally possible that he

was unduly influenced by Morgenstern and/or Lauterbach in this matter and consequently reversed himself after hearing what Isserman had to say.

There is no reason to doubt Marcus's statement that Freehof considered himself to be a socialist. He was close to at least two people who were committed socialists—his brother Morris and Elkan Voorsanger. However, like many American Jews of that era, he must have lost his enthusiasm for it as he moved up the economic ladder. Although he later preached a great many sermons on contemporary affairs, he never betrayed the slightest sympathy for socialism in any of them; they generally appear to be conventionally liberal.

Freehof recorded a momentous vote on one other issue during his faculty years. Professor Neumark's daughter, Martha, was enrolled as a student in the Preparatory Department; in fact, for three years Freehof was one of her instructors, and in 1920–1921 he was her alternative choice for academic advisor. In the spring of 1921 Ms. Neumark petitioned the faculty to allow her to have a High Holy Day pulpit the following fall. The matter went back and forth between the faculty and the Board of Governors, with the faculty voting twice on the question. Deutsch, Lauterbach, Morgenstern, and Freehof were opposed both times. Lauterbach and Freehof specifically stated that "the reason for their negative vote [was] the ground that they are opposed to women officiating as rabbis."[158]

One other excerpt from Marcus's diary sheds light on Freehof's personal relationships during his years on the faculty: He recorded that it was himself and Freehof to whom Mrs. Deutsch turned at the time of her husband's death, serving as the *shomrim* (keepers) of the body and as pallbearers, and then to take charge of concluding his literary affairs.[159]

Last Years at HUC

In January 1921 Freehof submitted his doctoral proposal to the faculty:

> Gentlemen:–
>
> I beg to submit for your approval the following subject for a D.D. thesis:- "Private Prayers in the Talmud." The thesis will deal primarily with the private prayers of the Rabbis in b. Berahot 16b–17a & the corresponding prayers in J. Berahot 7d. It will endeavor through these prayers to contribute to the understanding of the liturgy in Amoraic times. It will deal with the theology of the prayers, their literary style, their place in the growth of the liturgy and so forth. The major will be Talmud & the two minors Medieval Jewish Commentaries, & Midrash.[160]

He completed his degree a little over a year later, passing his examination with honors, and was thereupon promoted to Professor of Liturgy. He was also honored at that time with preaching the chapel sermon on Founders' Day.[161]

Upon Kohler's resignation in March 1921, the Board of Governors appointed Professor Julian Morgenstern as HUC's interim president and a year later named him president. In the early years of his presidency, the College was under pressure to turn out as many rabbis as possible to meet the needs of the growing number of pulpits. More students meant a need for more faculty. In his first three years as president, Morgenstern appointed ten new faculty members, eight of whom remained at the College until their retirement or death: Jacob Mann and Jacob Rader Marcus, history; Israel Bettan, Midrash and homiletics; Abraham Cronbach, Jewish social studies; Samuel S. Cohon, theology; Abraham Z. Idelsohn, Jewish music; and Sheldon Blank and Nelson Glueck, Hebrew language and Bible. During this same period, three faculty members left the College: new appointee Louis B. Wolfenson for lack of competence and new appointee Henry Slonimsky because he preferred Stephen Wise's new Jewish Institute of Religion;[162] and, at the close of the 1923–1924 academic year, Professor Solomon B. Freehof, who accepted the position of rabbi of Kehilath Anshe Mayriv Congregation in Chicago.

Why should one of the College's full professors, a former student and longtime associate of the new president, a promising young scholar and popular teacher, leave just when the College was entering a period of unparalleled expansion? The answer is not clear. In his later years Freehof would answer only that he had a great desire to preach. He once said that there were thousands of sermons in him waiting to come out.[163] Asked about it in 1973, Freehof steadfastly refused to acknowledge that there were any difficulties whatsoever in the College's transition to Morgenstern's leadership. When asked if the Morgenstern presidency brought changes, Freehof replied, "I can't think of any. The College went along.… I'll tell you something. We were not attuned to awareness of change.…"[164] Asked about changes in the curriculum, he blandly noted only that when Lauterbach came there were stronger rabbinics, and when Neumark came there was stronger philosophy. Both of these men, however, were Kohler appointees and among Freehof's own teachers. Either age was blurring his recollection or he did not want to think back to the early years of Morgenstern's administration. When asked what determined his decision to leave, he replied,

> Well, I had been there for ten years. I was also, I had a fair amount of public speaking skill, and that part of my life and self-expression had no opportunity. Sometimes the College would send me around to lecture … and when this offer came from Chicago from KAM temple, I was glad to take it.[165]

He denied that he was at all dissatisfied:

> People told me that there was, people said there was some tension between Morgenstern and—Morgenstern and I were friends. There was no tension at all.… To me the College was a great pleasure but it became a very fine point of departure. It allowed me to enter the rabbinate with a resolution not to be an *amoretz* (ignoramus). The rabbinate is such a busy career that any man may be excused for not studying.[166]

There is, however, contradictory testimony. Rabbi Victor Reichert was certain that there was a strong disagreement between Morgenstern and Freehof:

> Q: Why do you think Freehof left?
>
> A: There again, I think a real sharp clash with Julian Morgenstern. Very sharp. I think so. Freehof's still alive, you ought to –
>
> Q: Yes, I did. He denies it.
>
> A. Does he deny that he used to characterize Julian Morgenstern as one of a, there's a kind of a fish that emits all kinds of smoke? Wordy, you know.… I'm interested that Freehof said that he did not [have any quarrel with Morgenstern].[167]

Given Freehof's lifelong tendency to minimize disagreements it is likely that there is some substance in Reichert's comments, but they shed no light on the precise nature of the conflict between the two men. Balfour Brickner reported hearing from his father that Morgenstern "hated" what Freehof was doing with responsa, because he did not like seeing the emphasis in Reform go back to rabbinics as opposed to Bible.[168] It is true that Morgenstern was uncomfortable with both traditional Jewish observance and the study of rabbinic literature; however, while this may describe relations between the two men at a later date, there is no evidence that Freehof was at all interested in responsa while he was still on the HUC faculty, so Brickner's comment is unpersuasive as a possible reason for Freehof's departure. Perhaps the answer is more personal. Morgenstern's great supporter on the faculty before his rise to the presidency was Lauterbach. Lauterbach was also Freehof's mentor, and a strong friendship developed between the two. Perhaps Morgenstern, who needed to be in control of everything at the College down to the smallest detail, felt threatened by the growing closeness between Lauterbach and Freehof, who shared both a personal background and an academic expertise that excluded him. Or perhaps Freehof was flattered and tempted by the opportunity to serve a large, prestigious congregation and to receive a commensurately handsome salary. Perhaps it was some combination of all of these factors that led to his departure from the College. The reality is unknowable; all we can say is that it may not have been as simple a decision as he made it out to be later in life.[169]

In February 1924 Freehof delivered what was apparently his final sermon in the HUC Chapel as a faculty member. The sermon, "First Fruits," bears all of the hallmarks of a mature Freehof sermon: apt use of Scripture, obvious

familiarity with the rabbinic commentaries, an eloquence that sweeps the listener along, and a restatement of some aspect of human experience with an end to providing spiritual comfort and insight. As the years passed, many of his later sermons became so conventional in sentiment that it must have been only the preacher's eloquence that prevented the original listeners from noticing that what was being said was actually rather trite. "First Fruits," by contrast, is imbued with the passion of his own experience.[170]

The sermon opens with an eloquent and romantic portrait of the ancient Israelites bringing their harvest offerings to the Temple. Freehof notes that the offering of first fruits required more courage and determination on the part of the worshiper than did the later offerings, since the harvest's outcome was still in doubt. Having stated his *mashal* (parable), Freehof then goes on to give his *nimshal* (lesson): Young rabbis should offer their "first fruits," i.e., the gifts of their younger years, with enthusiasm and not feel that they need wait until they are mature men who have harvested their lives' experience. Yet, he continues, young rabbis are often uncertain and confused as to what their message should be, particularly in these troubled times when traditional religion appears so much less compelling than do modern intellectual currents. How, then, is a young rabbi to overcome this confusion and uncertainty? Just as the first fruits were brought not from any species but only from the seven species that grew in the Land of Israel, so young rabbis have merely to ground themselves in their own biblical inheritance. It is not only unnecessary but positively unnatural for them to adopt any of the fashionable intellectual perspectives available to them. The prophets and the rabbis have already articulated for them a vision of the world that is completely sufficient upon which to base their lives and their rabbinates.

The message of Freehof's valedictory sermon reflects the reality that the postwar decade was a difficult period for adherents of traditional religions. The disillusionment that set in after the failure of Wilsonian idealism, the collapse of the Victorian social order and its replacement by a new mass culture of consumption, the spread of new ideas such as those of Freud, the passing of the Progressive impulse, the cynicism generated by the widespread flouting of Prohibition—all of these combined with an unprecedented material prosperity to send many in 1920s America, especially its youth, off into the pursuit of pleasure or, if they were of an inquiring mind, into the exploration of "alternative" systems of meaning, religious or secular.[171] Even rabbis and rabbinic students were not immune to the temper of the times. To many of Freehof's students, remaining committed to entering the rabbinate must have seemed like an uphill struggle. Freehof himself, however, seems to have been immune from these doubts. In the succeeding sixty-six years of his life he never wavered, either in his preaching or his writing, in his commitment to what he understood to be a simple and straightforward faith in the God of the Bible and of the rabbis.

Joan S. Friedman is a visiting assistant professor of History and Religious Studies and Campus Rabbi at the College of Wooster in Ohio. She is writing a book about Solomon B. Freehof's "Reform Responsa."

Notes

[1]The term is Michael A. Meyer's; it is the title of Chapter Eight of *Response to Modernity*, the chapter in which he discusses the interwar changes in Reform. Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[2]Philip P. Bregstone, *Chicago and Its Jews: A Cultural History* (Chicago, 1933), 258.

[3]Solomon B. Freehof to Sidney Akselrad, 12 Sept. 1980, Freehof Papers, 435/7/2 American Jewish Archives (AJA), Cincinnati, Ohio. In this letter Freehof also claims that Zalman Ber was a direct descendant of the first Lubavitcher Rebbe.

[4]Shklov was a center of Chabad Hasidism by the second decade of the nineteenth century. (David Fishman, *Russia's First Modern Jews: The Jews of Shklov* [New York: New York University Press, 1995], 7–15.) Chernigev, in northern Ukraine, also became a Chabad center after two sons of the third Rebbe, Rabbi Menahem Mendel Schneerson (1789–1866, known as the "Zemach Zedek,") established their own courts in towns in the Chernigev district: Israel Noah (1816–1883) in Nezhin (or Nejin), and Yosef Yitzhak (1819–1876) in Ovrutsch.

[5]Freehof to Jacob Rader Marcus, 8 October 1982, 435/1/1, AJA. All of Freehof's extant family and childhood reminiscences are either in this letter, an undated biographical questionnaire that he completed for the American Jewish Archives (435/1/1) or in Kenneth J. Weiss's interview with him (Freehof, Solomon B., interview by Kenneth J. Weiss, 23 June 1978, C-72, AJA).

[6]"An opshtam fun di Lubavitsher rebeyim, a produkt fun der idisher un algemayner kultureler velt, fun Abaye un Rava un Marx un Kropotkin, eyner fun di ershte kempfer in di shuros fun dem sotziyalistish-tziyonistishen gedank…." Dovid Pinsky, "Bimkom forvort—a par verter fun Dovid Pinsky." Moshe [Morris] Freilacoff, *Geklibene Shriftn* (Atlanta, 1938), 5.

Perhaps Freehof himself tried to trace his ancestry, for he owned a copy of the Yiddish translation of *Beit Rabi*, an account of the Lubavitcher dynasty, published by Z. Sh. Shereberg (Vilna, 1904). The volume today is in the stacks of the Klau Library of HUC in Cincinnati. At the top of the title page is the signature "Solomon B. Freehof August 1915" and below it is another: "J.R. Marcus April 1921."

[7]In a letter to Jacob Rader Marcus, Freehof wrote that he had, for example, a cousin named Boris Fridkin, "who was (don't jump) the manager of a Cossack Dancing Team!" Telling his old friend Jake Marcus "don't jump" when mentioning a Cossack dance troupe is typical of Freehof's humor. Freehof to Jacob Rader Marcus, 8 October 1982, 435/1/1, AJA.

[8]Avraham Hanokh Glitzenshtein, *Sefer Ha-Toldot Admor MHRSh"B* (Brooklyn: Otzar Ha-Hasidim, 1976), passim.

[9]HUC Faculty minutes of 12 September 1910 reveal that among the new students admitted is a "Solomon Frelikoff," but by October 1911 College records refer to him as "Freehof." Hebrew Union College Papers, 5/6/3, B-3, AJA. Of the siblings, only his brother Morris and sister Esther retained the old name; the rest also went by Freehof.

[10]Telephone conversation with Rabbi A. Stanley Dreyfus, 25 March 2002. I am grateful to Rabbi Dreyfus for informing me of the College's actions in this regard and giving me several examples.

[11]A 1954 letter to his brother Morris Freilacoff was addressed to "Maurice Freehof," and a letter to his sister went to "Esther Freehof." Freehof to Maurice Freehof, Washington, DC, 29 November 1954, Freehof Files, F Miscellaneous 1954-55, Rodef Shalom Congregation, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Freehof to Miss Esther Freehof, Baltimore, Maryland, 12 September 1978, 435/2/7, AJA.

[12]Freehof to Jacob Rader Marcus, 8 October 1982, 435/1/1, AJA; Kenneth J. Weiss, "Solomon B. Freehof—Reforging the Links: An Approach to the Authenticity of the Reform Rabbi in the Modern World," D.H.L. dissertation (Los Angeles: HUC-JIR, 1980), 10.

[13]The Baltimore City Directories for 1936, 1937, and 1940 list him as "Reverend Isaac Freilachoff, rabbi Lubawitz Nusach Ari Congregation." Photocopies from Baltimore City Directories, courtesy of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, Maryland.

[14]For details on the life and career of Rabbi Hayim Zundel Maccoby (1856–1916), known as the Maggid of Kamenets after a two-year stint as that community's preacher, see Hayim Reuven Rabinowitz, *Diyok'na'ot shel Darshanim* (Jerusalem: Reuven Mass, 1967), 297ff.; *Entziklopedia shel haTziyoniut Hadatit*, ed. Yitzhak Raphael, Vol. 3 (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1965), 501ff.; and Ehud Luz, *Parallels Meet: Religion and Nationalism in the Early Zionist Movement* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1988), 110.

[15]For example, the second group of BILU pioneers to immigrate to Palestine included a young man from Shklov only five years older than Isaac Freilichoff, and among the signers of a letter from another BILU group waiting to leave Kharkov in February 1882 there is listed one Ya'akov Barukh of Chernigov. A Hibbat Zion society was established in Chernigov in 1887, the year of Freilichoff's marriage in that city. A year later there was also a Hibbat Zion society in Nezhin. Shulamit Laskov, ed., *Documents on the History of Hibbat-Zion and the Settlement of Eretz Israel*, (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University/Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Me'uchad Publishing House Ltd., 1982), Vol. I, 262 and 150–151; Vol. V, 220–221;Vol. VI, 160.

[16]One of his British-born cousins, he reminisced, was Dr. J. Louis Blonstein, O.B.E. (named for the same *zeyde* Yehuda Leib as Freehof's brother Louis, the grandfather who was Freehof's first teacher as a child), who bore a close physical resemblance to Freehof. He was knighted, continued Freehof, "not for being a good doctor—*a nekhtige tog!*"— but for being the head of the British amateur boxing association. He had been a boxer and had pioneered specialized medicine for the care of boxers. C-72, AJA.

[17]Solomon B. Freehof, *Reform Jewish Practice and its Rabbinic Background*, Vols. I & II (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1963), 10–11; Solomon B. Freehof, *Modern Reform Responsa* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1971), 5–8.

[18]The quality of this neighborhood may be judged by the fact that in 1888, only four years before Solomon Freehof's birth, Jack the Ripper murdered Annie Chapman in the yard of 25 Hanbury Street.

[19]Sir Samuel Montagu, father of Lily Montagu, was the Member of Parliament for the East End from 1885–1900 and a fierce advocate for the east European Jews within the native Jewish community, of which he was a leading member.

[20]In his 1978 interview Freehof said that he was born and grew up at 5 Black Lion Yard, a one-block street that runs from Whitechapel Road to Montague Street. On this occasion he also talked about visiting his childhood home in the decades after World War II. The formerly Jewish immigrant neighborhood was now all Pakistani, though some Jewish jewelers remained there. In the 1950s, he recalled, he was eating in a kosher restaurant there and met an Orthodox rabbi who wore a Roman collar. This led him to remark that J. Leonard Levy, his predecessor at Rodef Shalom, also wore one when he first came to his pulpit in Stockton, California. The English rabbis thought nothing of it "but to us it looks so goyish." C-72, AJA.

[21]Lloyd P. Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England, 1870–1914* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1960), 221–229.

[22]The Jewish Working Lads' Brigade was the brainchild of the eccentric and colorful Colonel Albert Michael Goldsmid. Goldsmid, born Albert Edward Goldsmid in India in 1846, was the son of a high-ranking British military officer of German Jewish origins who had converted to Christianity. In 1866, the young Goldsmid received his officer's commission; in 1870, he returned formally to Judaism and from then on created quite a stir as a Jewishly observant officer in the British Army. He was an early and active adherent of Hibbat Zion in Britain and was the model for the title character of George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*. In 1895 he convinced

the Maccabees, a Jewish intellectual society of which he was a member, to establish the Jewish Working Lads' Brigade, which promoted physical fitness and camping skills among the boys of the East End. Taking off from the "muscular Christianity" model of the Church Lads' Brigade, it was a sort of proto-Scouting movement that emphasized quasi-military training combined with a Zionist outlook. At its height it enrolled perhaps 1,500 boys. Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, 174, and Elhanan Oren, *Hibbat Tziyon Bi-Britannia 1878–1898* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University/Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Me'uchad, 1974), 28ff., 96.

[23]Amos Elon describes the scene as follows: "On July 12 [1896] Herzl addressed an excited crowd at the Jewish Workingmen's Club of Whitechapel; the meeting had been called by its young organizers in defiance of the existing communal leadership. Only a fraction of the huge, sweltering crowd gained admission to the hall. As in Sofia, the sheer glamour of Herzl's presence and the magic appeal of his message—'We are a *people, one* people'—electrified an audience already excited by their exuberant leaders." Amos Elon, *Herzl* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), 207.

[24]At this point in the interview Freehof interrupted his reminiscences to tell the old joke: Why will God serve both the *shor ha-bor* and the *livyatan* (Behemoth and Leviathan, the legendary one-of-a-kind land and sea animals) in *Gan Eden* (paradise)? Because there are Jews so *frum* (pious) that they won't trust even God's *shehitah* (kosher slaughtering) and so He has to supply them with fish. C-72, AJA.

[25]C-72; 435/1/1, AJA.

[26]Gerald Sorin, "A Time for Building: The Third Migration 1880–1920," in *The Jewish People in America*, ed. Henry L. Feingold, Vol. 3 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 137–142.

[27]Philip Kahn, Jr., *A Stitch in Time: The Four Seasons of Baltimore's Needle Trades* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1989), 79 and Appendix 11.

[28]See "Directory of Local Jewish Organizations in the United States," *American Jewish Year Book* 1907–1908 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1907), 192–200.

[29]1910 U.S. Census, National Archives microfilm series T624, reel 553, courtesy of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, Maryland. Like many immigrants, however, the Freilichoffs rented space to relatives to make ends meet. The record reveals that in addition to Isaac and Goldie [sic] Freilachoff [sic] and six of their children, the house was occupied by renters Morris Freilachoff, age forty-two, a ladies' tailor; his wife Bessie, age thirty; and their children Hyman, age seven, and Nathan, age four.

In April 1910, when the census worker recorded the particulars of the Freilichoff family, Isaac and Goldie [Golda] were respectively forty-three and forty-one years old and had been married for twenty-three years. He was self-employed; his occupation was "Jewish Rabbi" and his place of employment was "Church." He and all of his children were listed as able to speak English; Goldie was listed as speaking "Hebrew." All were literate. Isaac had immigrated in 1902; Goldie and all the children arrived in 1903. The children were: Jeanne (or Jane), age nineteen, employed as a "Vest Baster" in a factory, unemployed for a total of eight weeks in 1909; Solomon, age eighteen, employed as a teacher in a "Hebrew school" and a school attendee at least part time since September 1909; Ada, age fifteen, neither employed nor enrolled in school; Esther, age twelve, and Fannie, age eight, both in school; and Louis, age six and not yet enrolled in school.

The "Hebrew school" at which Solomon was a teacher at that time must have been the new Jewish Educational Alliance (JEA), where he volunteered his services, according to a news article. ("'Good Old Days' of J.E.A. Clubs To Be Recalled At Reunion," *Baltimore Evening Sun*, 27 September 1955, n.p.). The JEA was formed in 1910 out of the merger of the Maccabean Society and the Daughters of Israel, two uptown organizations that provided educational and recreational activities for East Baltimore's immigrant Jewish children. It also conducted night classes for adults in English language and other subjects. I am grateful to Mendy Gunter of the Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore for sending me a photocopy of this article.

[30]A.D. Glushakow, "Baltimore—The Cradle of American Zionism," in *Pictorial History of Maryland Jewry* (Baltimore: Jewish Voice Publishing Company, 1955), 143.

[31]Dr. Herman Seidel, "Baltimore: Corner Stone of Labor Zionism," in Glushakow, *Pictorial History*, 148.

[32]When the 1910 census was taken, Morris was already living in Washington, DC, where he was active in Poale Zion (*Jewish Comment*, 12 November 1909, 92; and 10 December 1909, 156). Morris became a Yiddishist because the proletariat was Yiddish-speaking. According to his niece, Teresa Schwartz, Morris "moved in very different circles" from the rest of the family, though relations among them were always warm. He had "a very Jewish home" but did not attend synagogue. Although he went to law school in Washington, DC, he never practiced law; instead, he wrote for the Yiddish socialist newspaper *Der Tog* and was its circulation manager for the southern United States, which entailed a great deal of travel. He and his wife had four children, so he had to work hard to support the family. (Teresa [Mrs. Efrem] Schwartz, daughter of Ada Freehof Klein, Monroeville, Pennsylvania. Telephone interview with Joan S. Friedman, 12 December 2000). He is the author of a Yiddish-language biography of the Italian republican hero Giuseppe Mazzini.

When Yitzhak Ben Zvi came to the United States during the World War I, he lived with Morris in Washington, DC. Freehof wrote to Jacob Rader Marcus: "You know Ben Zvi, who later became President of Israel, and Ben Gurion both left Palestine during the English war and came to America for security. Ben Zvi lived with my brother Morris in Washington for a whole year and Father looked upon him as another son. Later on, when Father moved to live out his old age in Israel, Ben Zvi had become President of Israel, and Father visited him so often that he married Father off, and that is the way I happened to get a stepmother!" Solomon B. Freehof to Jacob Rader Marcus, 8 October 1982, 435/1/1, AJA.

[33]A questionnaire circulated by Jacob Rader Marcus asked the question, "How 'Jewish' were your ancestors? What was their relation to the synagogue and to religious life?" Freehof's response was, "Oy! We are descendants of Snear [sic] Zalman founder of Chabad. & father was a Sofer & a Mohel. How Jewish!!!" (Undated questionnaire, 435/1/1, AJA). Isaac Freilichoff advertised his skills in the *Baltimore Amerikaner*, a Yiddish-language weekly that was published between 1908 and 1910. Almost every week's edition for those two years carried a prominent bilingual box advertisement for the ritual circumcision services of "Rev. I. Freilichoff, 117 S. Exeter St." The advertisement warned people, "*Makht keyn misteyk ven ir broikht a moyl* [Don't make a mistake if you need a *mohel*]." *Baltimore Amerikaner* (6 March 1908): 4.

[34]C-72, AJA. The following information on Freehof's parents comes from the same source.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid.

[37]In responding to a congregant's inquiry concerning the origins of Hanukkah gelt, he explained this, adding, "As a boy I used to receive five pennies, but by now Mrs. Freehof has gotten me up to five dollar bills!" Freehof to Miss Henrietta Chotiner, 28 December 1981, 435/2/7, AJA.

[38]For example, in 1978 Freehof wrote to his sister Esther: "You realize that this is the second question in Jewish religious law and custom which you have asked me. Both of them deal with questions of *milchig* and *fleischig*.… Even though I found some Orthodox authority justifying my decision, you were still a little uneasy about it because you suspected my Reform tendency of being too liberal.

"That explains why in asking me your second question … last week, you prefaced it with a warning that you wanted an *Orthodox* opinion.…

"Since this decision is so logical that you will be suspicious of it, there is a definite decision by a leading American Orthodox authority, Moshe Feinstein, which … is about a related situation which can well apply to yours." Freehof to Miss Esther Freehof [sic], Baltimore, Maryland, 12 September 1978, 435/2/7, AJA.

[39]Teresa (Mrs. Efrem) Schwartz, daughter of Ada Freehof Klein, Monroeville, Pennsylvania, telephone interview by Joan S. Friedman, 12 December 2000; Baltimore City Directories 1936, 1937, 1940, 1942, 1956, 1958, 1961, 1964. Faye Freehof was the author of "Forever and —," 1929, and "The Little Lost Tree," 1945. Directory of American Women Playwrights, www.geocities.com/Broadway/Alley/5379/ 1900FoFy.html (accessed 15 December 2000). She died in the mid-1970s. Freehof, *Reform Responsa for Our Time* (Cincinnati: HUC Press, 1977), v. This page bears the dedication "To the dear and unforgettable memory of my beloved sister Faye Evelyn Freehof."

[40]The following history of the Baltimore Talmud Torah is from Raymond Bloom, "History of Jewish Education in Baltimore During the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," doctoral dissertation (Dropsie University, 1972) unless otherwise noted.

[41]*American Jewish Year Book* 7 (1905–1906): 222.

[42]William Rosenau, "Reminiscences," *HUC Monthly* 8 (December 1921): 54–59 and (January 1922): 83–86.

[43]Allan Schwartzman, "William Rosenau: His Life and Work," Rabbinic Thesis (HUC-JIR, 1955), 6.

[44]Louis F. Cahn, *History of Oheb Shalom 1853–1953* (Baltimore: Oheb Shalom Congregation, 1953), 42; Isidore Blum, *The Jews of Baltimore* (Historical Review Publishing Co., 1910), 20; Isaac Fein, *The Making of a Jewish Community: The History of Baltimore Jewry from 1773 to 1920* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971), 117.

[45]Sermon, 9 January 1909, William Rosenau Papers, 41/4/1, AJA.

[46]Hymen Saye, "The Baltimore Talmud Torah," *Generations: Jewish Historical Society of Maryland* 2, n. 1 (June 1981): 14–15.

[47]Ps. 19:13: "Who can be aware of errors?" Freehof's translation is tongue-in- cheek.

[48]C-72, AJA.

[49]Solomon Bennett Freehof, interview by Michael A. Meyer, 9 March 1973, Tape 1203, AJA.

[50]Mel Scult, "Schechter's Seminary," in *Tradition Renewed: A History of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America*, ed. Jack Wertheimer, Vol. I (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1997), 76.

[51]C-72, AJA.

[52]While Freehof did not indicate what he studied with Rosenau, the latter has provided posterity with an explicit description of his recruiting and training procedures. In April 1921 the College's Board of Governors, concerned about declining enrollments, sent a letter to all CCAR members urging them to be aggressive in recruiting suitable candidates for the rabbinate. The letter included a written statement by William Rosenau describing his method:

"Before I prepare anyone I endeavor to find out by an examination of the young man's antecedents and his ideals as to whether he is fit to enter the calling of the Rabbi. Again I should like to observe that in preparing boys I ignore entirely previous attainments and follow the curriculum of the Hebrew Union College as published in the latest catalogue of the Institution, advancing from grade to grade in my instruction. Moreover, I prefer to train such men who have gone thru [sic] or are about to complete the high school, inasmuch as I would rather send students of more matured minds to the Hebrew Union College than boys of 14 or 15 years of age. The reasons are certainly apparent to you without specification on my part." Abba Hillel Silver Papers, Microfilm Roll #28, folder 661, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.

[53]C-72, AJA.

[54]5/6/3, AJA.

[55]Michael A. Meyer, "A Centennial History," in *Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion at One Hundred Years*, ed. Samuel E. Karff (Cincinnati: HUC Press, 1976), 20.

[56]Ibid., 26.

[57]Ibid., 51ff.

[58]Ibid., 60.

[59]Jacob Tarshish wrote of its "droning, sooty neighborhood windows" and Jacob Rader Marcus noted that the College was located at "724 Sixth St. Negro district. Awful odor." Jacob Tarshish, "History of the Class of '15," *HUC Monthly* 2 (June 1915): 46; Diary entry, 15 May 1912, Jacob Rader Marcus Papers, 210/13/1, AJA.

[60]Tarshish, "History," 46.

[61]A favorite student trick was to go into the bathroom stalls, lock them, crawl out, and then wait as the professors rushed to use them between classes. Stanley Brav, ed., *Telling Tales Out of School* (Cincinnati: HUC-JIR Alumni Association, 1965), 13.

[62]Tarshish, "History": 47.

[63]Simon Cohen, "Reminiscences," *HUC Monthly* 8 (June 1922): 230–231.

[64]This is not a non sequitur on Simon Cohen's part. He is describing a typical urban saloon of the type that infuriated Prohibitionists. Such establishments customarily served free meals to their clientele while making their money from the alcohol they consumed. Establishments such as these in ethnic and immigrant neighborhoods also frequently served as informal gathering places for machine politicians and their supporters, thus making them a target for Progressives, as well. No wonder the students lacked a certain prestige before their move uptown!

[65]Brav, *Telling Tales*, 15.

[66]*HUC Monthly* 2 (June 1915): 8–11.

[67]Ibid., 61.

[68]Meyer, "A Centennial History," 60, 73, 82.

[69]Tape 1203, AJA.

[70]Jacob Rader Marcus, interview by Michael A. Meyer, 27 February 1974, Tape 1204, AJA.

[71]Nathan Perilman quoted in Brav, *Telling Tales*, 112.

[72]Tape 1203, AJA.

[73]Tape 1203, AJA.

[74]Tarshish, "History": 46.

[75]Victor Reichert, interview by Michael A. Meyer, 15 February 1974, Tape 1203 and 1205, AJA.

[76]Tape 1205, AJA.

[77]Reichert, who entered the College in 1920 when Kohler was already old and growing feeble, nevertheless recalled being moved by the power of his preaching, and Freehof said of his preaching, "He was a blazing fire." Tapes 1203 and 1205, AJA.

[78]Tape 1205, AJA. Jacob Rader Marcus's diary contains several disparaging references to David Philipson, such as this from Saturday, 30 March 1912: "Founders Day … Kohler spoke 40 min … Philipson benedicted. (Crowed 4 times.)" As a senior student he was invited to dine at the Philipsons' and commented acidly that "the meal was good but portions were small. They don't overeat." (Diary entry, 30 March 1912, 210/13/1,4, AJA). In later years Marcus's opinion of Philipson must have softened; the two eventually established a good relationship, and after Philipson's death Marcus honored him by wearing his robe at graduation. (Email communication from Jonathan Sarna to Frederic Krome, forwarded to Joan S. Friedman, 1 November 2005.)

[79]Tape 1203, AJA.

[80]210/13/1, AJA.

[81]Meyer, "A Centennial History," 57–58.

[82]"[Monday 1 April 1912:] Went to school. All quite. [sic] No College erev Passover. Returned home. Studied very little—4: Walked to Dr. Grossman [sic]. Very rainy weather. Met J. Bloch there. Rode back. First Seder— No service, no ceremony— nothing. Retired 9:30."

"[Tuesday 2 April 1912:] Rode to Temple. Today is פסח. Dr. Grossman [sic] spoke. O.K. Rode home. Read Camille & M. Wolfenstein. Eat nuts. Talked to Rosen & Rosenberg. Did not study at night. Same seder. I drank no wine. Retire 9:30." 210/13/1, AJA.

[83]Tape 1203, AJA. Meyer then asked, "A student was not allowed to worship with a hat?" and Freehof replied, "No, absolutely not."

[84]5/B-3, AJA. Freehof later recalled, "Dr. Deutsch almost threw me out because I spelled 'Mendelssohn' with … one s." Tape 1203, AJA. See also Tarshish, "History," 46–48.

[85]Professor of Education Franzblau was commissioned to do a survey of the rabbinic student body for the years 1904–1929, which was published as Abraham Franzblau, *A Quarter Century of Rabbinical Training at the HUC* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1931). He had his own obscure system for determining cumulative averages. His notations can be seen on the transcripts of the students in his study, including Silver, Freehof, and Marcus. The only classes in which Freehof earned less than a ninety were two semesters of Buttenwieser's Biblical Exegesis, and then he received G+, meaning eighty-five to ninety. HUC Student Transcripts, Microfilm #118, AJA.

[86]Minutes of faculty meetings, 23 January 1914, 20 June 1914, 5/B-3; *HUC Monthly* 2 (June 1915): 6–7, 58.

[87]Minutes of faculty meeting, 17 October 1911, 5/B-3, AJA. On 19 April 1912 Max Heavenrich of Saginaw wrote to Isaac Bloom, Secretary of the HUC Board of Governors: "For the Holidays we would like to receive the services of Solomon Freehof, as he has given us excelent [sic] satisfaction and the congregation would be most pleased to have him with us again. Would you kindly request Dr. Kohler to assign him to Saginaw?" Bloom responded that he saw no reason why Dr. Kohler would not comply with this request. Max Heavenrich to Isaac Bloom, 19 April 1912, and Isaac Bloom to Max Heavenrich, 23 April 1912, 5/8/1, AJA.

[88]S.J. Michelson to Kaufmann Kohler, 22 April 1913, 5/8/1: "Now, Dr. Koehler [sic], in strict confidence, we do not want the student you sent us last year, as he was not at all satisfactory in more ways than one. Firstly, he could not deliver a lecture at all, and, secondly, he was not personally liked. We want a student who can deliver a lecture without having to continually refer to his notes. In fact, we prefer one who could deliver a sermon without the aid of notes." Bloom replied that they would keep this in mind when assignments were made. On the carbon of this letter someone penciled in "Freehof." A subsequent letter from June 1913 informs them that Dr. Kohler has assigned Solomon Freehof to Cairo and assures them that "Mr. Freehof has given satisfaction in all that he has undertaken and you will no doubt be pleased with his services." Isaac Bloom to S.J. Michelson, 29 April 1913 and 3 June 1913, 5/8/1, AJA.

The College was, of course, advertising itself through the students it sent to these small congregations, so President Kohler was quite concerned that the students reflected well on the institution. Although he himself spoke with a heavy German accent that the students mocked, he was very reluctant to assign High Holy Day pulpits to students who spoke with east European accents. In July 1915 he wrote from his vacation home to Henry Englander: "[A]s to Linfield I can not change my opinion and jeopardize the interests of the College by sending him anywhere as *reader* or *preacher* unless the Congregation is *directly* informed that he has a *strong foreign accent* and if this *not be considered* an obstacle we would send him. Otherwise I am decidedly against it." Kaufmann Kohler to Henry Englander, 17 July 1915, 5/2/7, AJA.

[89]Henry Englander to I. Isaacson, 3 June 1914, 5/B-8, AJA.

[90]Correspondence between Samuel Horchow, Portsmouth, Ohio, and Henry Englander, April 1914, 5/8/1, AJA.

[91]Freehof to Henry Englander, [September?] 1914, 5/6/6; Freehof to Englander, 5/6/4; Freehof to Englander, 5/12/3; Minutes of faculty meetings, 6 October 1914, 29 May 1915, 5/B-3, AJA.

[92]"Amongst Ourselves," *HUC Monthly* 1 (December 1914): 29.

[93]As the first program of the fall 1913 semester, this topic was definitely chosen for its timeliness. In March 1911 the mutilated body of a Ukrainian boy had been found in a cave outside Kiev; four months later the police had arrested a Jew, Mendel Beilis, and charged him with ritual murder. Despite worldwide protests from governments, scientists, clergymen, and other persons of distinction, Beilis was imprisoned for two years before being put on trial in September and October of 1913. The czarist government's anti-Semitic case fell apart in the courtroom and a jury composed of Russian peasants acquitted Beilis, who promptly left the country with his family.

[94]Biographies of new ordinees, *HUC Monthly* 2 (June 1915): 6; Simon Cohen, "Reminiscences," *HUC Monthly* 8 (June 1922): 228.

[95]"The Literary Society," *HUC Monthly* 1 (June 1914): 28–29.

[96]Diary entry, 6 February 1912, 210/13/1, AJA.

[97]Diary entry, 23 March 1914, 210/13/1, AJA.

[98]AJA Microfilm #118; Brav, *Telling Tales*, 13. Voorsanger was so upset by the United States' entry into World War I that he resigned his pulpit and enlisted in a military hospital unit. Elkan Cohn Voorsanger Papers, 256/1/2, AJA.

[99]256/1/4, AJA.

[100]Brickner, born in 1892, grew up on New York's Lower East Side and was a member of the Dr. Herzl Zion Club established by Abba Hillel Silver. Brickner served as rabbi of Cleveland's Euclid Avenue Temple for almost forty years and worked closely with Freehof during World War II on military chaplaincy matters. After his untimely death in an automobile accident, his widow wrote Freehof: "I don't know whether you know it, but you are my rabbi." Rebecca Brickner, Cleveland, Ohio, to Freehof, 11 June 1958, RS "Condolence Calls & Letters 1957–58"; Rabbi Balfour Brickner, telephone interview by Joan S. Friedman, 18 January 2001.

[101]Rabbi Malcolm Stern related that Lauterbach used to visit the Freehofs annually. "Each year Laudy would browse through the Freehof library. If he found a current work that he wanted, Laudy would announce, 'Dis I take!' If his choice fell on a rare volume of medieval responsa which he knew was close to Sol Freehof's heart, Laudy's announcement would be, 'Dis I borrow!' After Laudy's demise, Dr. Morgenstern wrote Dr. Freehof that he found a book with Sol's name in it among Laudy's effects and inquired as to its ownership. Sol's reply was, 'I don't know whether the volume in question was in the category of "Dis I take" or "Dis I borrow," but I can assure you, it's mine!'" Brav, *Telling Tales*, 117.

[102]Marc Lee Raphael, *Abba Hillel Silver: A Profile in American Judaism* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1989), 75; Rabbi Balfour Brickner, telephone interview by Joan S. Friedman, 18 January 2001.

[103]Diary entries, 2 March 1912, 14 April 1912, 1 June 1912, 210/13/1, AJA.

[104]See Isaac Mayer Wise's President's Message and the CCAR resolution condemning Zionism, *Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook (CCARY)* 8 (1897): x–xii, xli.

[105]For a different view of Kohler see Ya'akov Ariel, "Kaufmann Kohler and His Attitude Toward Zionism: A Reexamination," *American Jewish Archives* 43, n. 2 (1991): 207–223. However, I believe he fails to make his case. He can demonstrate only that Kohler supported efforts to settle persecuted Russian Jews in Palestine—something that many committed Reform anti-Zionists supported on humanitarian grounds. Kohler frequently and vehemently expressed his opposition to both political and cultural Zionism. For example, Jacob Rader Marcus recorded that at the 1912 Founder's Day commemoration Kohler "roasted Zionism & Ahad Ha'am." (diary entry, 30 March 1912, 210/13/1, AJA). Less than three years later, at the formal opening exercises of the 1915–1916 academic year, he bemoaned the rise of Zionism and the decline of Jewish religiosity in an address that was reprinted in the *HUC Monthly*. Kaufmann Kohler, "The Views and Principles of American Reform Judaism and Its Outlook in These Critical Times," *HUC Monthly* 2 (November 1915): 71–75.

[106]See Melvin Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), chs. 4–6.

[107]Undated written account of the incident by one of the students involved, James Heller Papers, 147/1/3, AJA.

[108]Meyer, "A Centennial History," 78.

[109]*At-bash*, a form of Hebrew wordplay that kabbalists used frequently to derive additional meanings from a text, substitutes for the letters *alef* through *taf* their counterparts from *taf* to *alef. Alef* becomes *taf, bet* becomes *shin*, and so forth. Hence the name *at-bash*: א"ת ב"ש.

[110]Rabbi Harvey E. Wessel to Edward P. Cohn, Tyler, Texas, 26 July 1973, SC-5477, AJA.

[111]Rabbi Balfour Brickner, telephone interview by Joan S. Friedman, 18 January 2001.

[112]Diary entries, 23 March 1914, 24 March 1914, 9 May 1914, 210/13/1, AJA. Jacob Rader Marcus's diary further indicates that the fraternity was still active in 1920 and that he was still opposed to their attempts to control student body politics. Unfortunately for us, he never articulated the reasons for his opposition.

[113]Ibid.

[114]Jacob Rader Marcus "heard a dandy sermon by Abe Silver, on Social Service" in January 1914 (diary entry, 24 January 1914, 210/13/1, AJA) and Heller's sermon on Zionism, delivered 29 May 1915, was reprinted in the *HUC Monthly* 2 (March 1916): 188–205.

[115]Diary entry, 10 January 1914, 210/13/1, AJA.

[116]A photograph of the 1914–1915 *HUC Monthly* Executive Committee shows Silver and Freehof seated with three other students standing behind them, but there is no way to know whether this reflects Freehof's actual place in the journal's hierarchy or merely the fact that he and Silver were both seniors. *HUC Monthly* 2 (June 1915): n.p.

[117]Max Heller, "Casuistry in Reform Judaism," *HUC Monthly* 1 (November 1914): 17–21.

[118]Editorial: "Responsa," *HUC Monthly* 1, n. 2 (November 1914): 2–3.

[119]Abba Hillel Silver, "Sermon," 22 January 1923, *Proceedings of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (PUAHC)* 10 (1921–1925): 9228; "The Democratic Impulse in Jewish History," *CCARY* 38 (1928): 199–216; and "Israel," *CCARY* 45 (1935): 312–342, especially 332–338.

[120]Joan S. Friedman, "The Writing of Reform Jewish Practice and Its Rabbinic Background," *Central Conference of American Rabbis Journal* 51, n. 3 (Summer 2004): 31–71.

[121]"For A College Press," *HUC Monthly* 1 (February 1915): 17.

[122]Solomon B. Freehof, "The Institution of Ordination," Rabbinic Thesis (HUC, 1915), title page.

[123]Elkan Voorsanger to Freehof, 256/1/4, AJA. For some reason the letter was never sent.

[124]The extant record book is a loose-leaf notebook with photocopied pages. The outside cover bears Freehof's hand lettered label: "1054 Weddings by S.B.F." Inside, the title page reads: רשימת קדושין שנסדרו על ידי \ הצעיר זלמן דוב בר' יצחק צבי \ המבונה פריהאף \ מהיום א' בשבת פרשת תצוה יום ט' בחודש \ אדר ראשון בשנת תרעו לפ"קספר 435/2/2, AJA.

[125]*HUC Monthly* 1 (January 1915): 15.

[126]The gradual shift in opinion from neutrality to support for Wilson's ultimate entry into the war is evident in the records of the CCAR conventions during the war years. In the summer of 1915 the rabbis still maintained a neutral stance and condemned jingoism; by 1918 it was clear that they had adopted the Wilsonian view of a war to make the world safe for democracy. See "Report of the Committee on Contemporaneous History" and "President's Message," *CCARY* 25 (1915): 65ff., 145, and "President's Message," *CCARY* 28 (1918): 159–162.

[127]*HUC Monthly* 4 (1918): 33. War sentiment was not unanimous, however. See G.A. Dobbert, "The Ordeal of Gotthard Deutsch," *American Jewish Archives* 20 (1968): 129–155.

[128]Earl Stover, *Up From Handymen: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1865–1920* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army, 1977), 150 and footnote ad loc.

[129]Cyrus Adler, "An Account of the Origins of the Jewish Welfare Board," in *Lectures, Selected Papers, Addresses* (Philadelphia: privately printed, 1933), 219–220.

[130]Louis Barish, "The American Jewish Chaplaincy," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 52 (September 1962): 12; Lee Levinger, *A Jewish Chaplain in France* (New York: Macmillan, 1921), 82.

[131]Minutes of faculty meeting, 15 October 1918, 5/B-3, AJA; Certificate of Military Service, issued by National Personnel Records Center, National Archives and Records Administration, St. Louis, Missouri, 30 April 1998, sent to Joan S. Friedman.

[132]Adler, "Origins," 227; Julian Morgenstern to Israel Bettan, 19 April 1919, Israel Bettan Papers, 618/5/3, AJA; Benjamin Friedman to Jacob Rader Marcus, 22 January 1985, SC-3775, AJA.

[133]One of the reasons Pershing was so insistent on recruiting chaplains was for this express purpose, about which he was a "fanatic." Stover, *Handymen*, 201.

[134]"On Saturday [night], 1 March 1919 Nathan Levine of Brooklyn, New York, Troop M, 3rd Cavalry, married Fortunée Karsenty of Paris (originally of Algiers), daughter of Maklouf Karsenty and Dju—a [illegible] Ben Danon at Bourbon les Bains, France," 435/7/7, AJA. Of his training, Freehof noted humorously many years later that it "did not teach me much, but I never expected too much from schools and I was satisfied that it did not do me harm." Freehof to Walter Jacob, 20 September 1955, "Dr. Freehof Personal," Rodef Shalom Congregation Archives, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

[135]Stover, *Handymen*, 196ff.; Levinger, *Jewish Chaplain*, passim; Gen. John J. Pershing and Lt. Gen. Hunter Liggett, *Report of the First Army American Expeditionary Forces: Organization and Operations* (Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas: The General Services Press, 1923), 91. Chaplain Israel Bettan was stationed at Third Army Headquarters at Coblenz for four months in the winter of 1919. His commanding officer wrote in his Officer's Record Book that there were "about 4,000 Soldiers of the Jewish faith in the Army scattered throughout the area, making it difficult to minister to them" and that Bettan had been "untiring" in his efforts (618/6/10, AJA). To assist the Jewish chaplains in their constant travels, the JWB provided each with an automobile. We must presume that Freehof also had a driver, since it is well known that he never learned to drive.

[136]Oral communication from Rabbi Walter Jacob, Rodef Shalom Congregation, January 1997.

[137]"Student Notes," *HUC Monthly* 6 (November 1919): 26, 28.

[138]Certificate of Military Service, issued by National Personnel Records Center, National Archives and Records Administration, St. Louis, Missouri, 30 April 1998, sent to Joan S. Friedman.

[139]Julian Morgenstern to Israel Bettan, 19 April 1919, 618/5/3, AJA.

[140]*HUC Monthly* 9 (November 1922): 27. A humorous column of faculty sayings titled "Famous Sayings of Famous Men" quotes him thus: "It took over 2,000 years to create our marvelous liturgy, but it only takes the D Grade one day to kill it." *HUC Monthly* 10 (May 1924): 23.

[141]Minutes of faculty meetings, 23 December 1920, 5/B-3, AJA. In 1922 a report on the school's basketball team noted that, "Doctor Freehof, an old admirer of the game, will be with us again this year. His advice and hints on basketball are just as valuable as his 'Rashi' and 'Liturgy.'" "A New Era," *HUC Monthly* 9 (December 1922): 27.

The *HUC Monthly* contains a number of humorous references to Freehof's ping pong playing, and in the 1923–1924 collection "Songs and Yells of the Hebrew Union College Student Body," one of the humorous song parodies about student life advises that any student who wants a scholarship should "make each teacher think he's fine/ So do not act fresh or flip / If you don't want to get in wrong / (Just) let Freehof beat in ping pong." 5/7/12, AJA.

[142]210/13/3, AJA.

[143]For example, the report of the Commission on Social Justice to the 1920 CCAR convention called strenuously for justice for industrial workers but also "condemn[ed] all slacking and sabotage, and … maintain[ed] the welfare of the public to be supreme above the interests of any class or classes." The report condemned equally both violence in labor disputes and governmental interference with constitutional rights of free speech and assembly. The only explicit reference to Bolsheviks in the convention record, however, merely notes that these are individuals who are hostile to all religions and that Jewish Bolsheviks are a foreign import who will disappear as they become acclimated to American conditions. "Report of the Commission on Social Justice;" Samuel Koch, "The Problem of the Unsynagogued Jew," *CCARY* 30 (1920): 88–89, 230–231.

[144]The note in question in the *HUC Monthly* had stated that the students were trying to raise $500 from alumni to bring leading speakers of the day to campus and that the names of the following had been submitted to Dr. Kohler for approval: Felix Adler, Mordecai Kaplan, Samuel Shulman, Stephen Wise, William Rosenau, Judah Magnes, Samuel Cohon, John H. Holmes, Felix Levy, Roger N. Baldwin, W.E.B. DuBois, Sigmund Livingston, Louis Marshall, Francis Neilson, Henry Cohen, Walter Lippman, Felix Frankfurter, Max Heller, Leo M. Franklin, Oswald G. Villard, and Ephraim Frisch. It further noted that since so many HUC students were in New York City during the summer, the Society had had summer sessions there and had met with Baldwin, Heller, Magnes, Adler, Lippman, and DuBois, as well as Percy S. Grant, Frank Harris, and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. *HUC Monthly* 7 (November 1920): 22–23.

[145]Minutes of faculty meeting, November 1920–January 1921, 5/B-3, AJA.

[146]Ibid.

[147]Ibid.

[148]Ibid.

[149]Ibid.

[150]210/13/3, AJA.

[151]Ibid.

[152]Isserman's leftist sympathies never disappeared, however. He would later visit the Soviet Union and, at the 1931 CCAR convention, delivered a passionate defense of the new state's achievements in response to a severe critique by Rabbi David Goldberg of its treatment of Judaism ("The Debacle of Religion in Russia—Judaism in the Mêlée" and Response, *CCARY* 41 [1931]: 243–283). Twenty years after that he was active in the defense of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.

[153]Jacob Rader Marcus and Freehof had discussed it a year earlier, for example, when Marcus was still a student: "[Fri 3/12/20] … went down to Doerr's and had supper with Sol Freehof.… Freehof and I discussed a number of things. He told me of the possibility of making Philly [David Philipson] temporary president if [Kohler] gets sick and possibly president in the event that anything serious happens. Philly at the same time to hold his temple. He tells me that Philly is behind all the trouble all the time and keeps the college salaries down all because he wants to keep those people in subjection to him. He says that if Philly is elected the faculty will buck him." After Morgenstern was appointed acting president, the politicking continued. In September 1921 he wrote, "Went to see Sol Freehof at his home. Talked College politics. He says Rosenau wants it bad but thinks Morgy will win because he is a fighter. Morgy is out now repairing his fences.… We saw Chaplin the Idle Class and Wallace Reid in the Hell Diggers. Both good." Diary entries, 12 March 1920 and 22 September 1921, 210/13/3, AJA.

[154]Meyer, "Centennial History," 87; "Faculty Notes," *HUC Monthly* 4 (November 1917): 78.

[155]Jacob Rader Marcus, interview by Michael A. Meyer, 9 March 1973, Tapes 1203-4, AJA.

[156]When the students told him they were thinking of going on strike to protest the treatment of Rosenberg and Isserman, Jacob Rader Marcus's diary comment was, "Fat chance the boys would have had in getting by with such an idea. You can't buck the college. Nosiree. You can't buck any big outfit unless you can completely shut it up and you can't do that with HUC." Diary entry, 3 February 1921, 210/13/3, AJA.

[157]He corresponded at length, for example, with his former student Nelson Glueck about the problems involved in the merger of the College with the Jewish Institute of Religion. Freehof opposed the plan initially, but once it became a *fait accompli* he favored a type of merger in which the New York institution's distinct identity would disappear. When, however, it appeared that influential Reform laypeople in New York were going to found and support a rival institution rather than be completely subject to Cincinnati, Freehof suggested that Glueck head that off by allowing the JIR much more independence. Freehof to Nelson Glueck, February 1956, "Hebrew Union College 1955–56," Rodef Shalom Congregation Archives.

[158]Minutes of faculty meetings, 23 December 1920, 26 May 1921, 15 June 1921, 5/B-3, AJA. In the end Ms. Neumark was not eligible to officiate because she did not pass all of her courses.

[159]Diary entries, 14, 15, and 17 October 1921, 210/13/3, AJA.

[160]Letter, Freehof to HUC Faculty, 5/6/10, AJA.

[161]"Student Activities," *HUC Monthly* 8 (May 1922): 210–211.

[162]Meyer, "A Centennial History," 91.

[163]C-72, AJA.

[164]Tape 1203, AJA.

[165]Ibid.

[166]Ibid.

[167]Tape 1205, AJA.

[168]Balfour Brickner, telephone interview by author, 18 January 2001.

[169]In this context it is perhaps worth noting that more than forty years later Louis Freehof observed of his brother that "the happiest times of his life is [sic] when he goes back to the College.…" Louis J. Freehof to Nelson Glueck, 19 January 1968, "Engagements Past 1967–68," Rodef Shalom Congregation Archives.

[170]Solomon B. Freehof, "First Fruits," *HUC Monthly* 10 (May 1924): 4–5.

[171]See Lynn Dumenil, *Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), especially ch. IV, "The Acids of Modernity: Sacred and Secular Interpretations." Members of the CCAR bemoaned the tenor of the times at conventions throughout the 1920s. While it would be a mistake to read too much into what are perennial lamentations about the failure of the synagogue to draw more worshippers and to produce more committed Jews, nevertheless the rabbinical conventions of this decade criticized, in particular, the materialism of the age and the desiccated and overly rational Reform that could not satisfy the hunger of those who yearned for something spiritual. See, for example, Rabbi Abram Simon, "President's Message," *CCARY* 34 (1924): 129.



Carolene Wachenheimer, Your Sisterhood Judaica Shop *(Cincinnati: NFTS, 1953): cover.*

(Courtesy Women of Reform Judasim collection, American Jewish Archives)

ARTICLE

The Gifts of the Jews: Ideology and Material Culture in the American Synagogue Gift Shop

Joellyn Wallen Zollman

"For Jewish occasions, let there be Jewish gifts," declared sisterhood member Althea Silverman in the pages of *Women's League Outlook* magazine in 1936.[1] What constituted a Jewish gift in 1936? Silverman suggested an engraved *kiddush* cup for the bar mitzvah boy, a silver *mezuzah* for a housewarming, and a "Palestinian olive wood matzah holder" for the "Master of the House" to "proudly use and cherish as he conducts the seder service for his children and grandchildren."[2]

Silverman's Jewish gift suggestions are notable in that they contain a series of messages regarding American Jewish culture during this period. Her specification that the *mezuzah* should be silver and the *kiddush* cup engraved mark the gifts as decidedly middleclass and thus appealing to the upwardly mobile American Jewish community. Her inclusion of an object from British-mandate Palestine indicates a commitment to the Yishuv. And, finally, the link that she makes between the gifting of the matzah holder and the continued practice of Judaism over the next two generations conveys the equation on which she and countless other pioneering gift shop gurus based their program of synagogue shopping: namely, attractive, middle-class Jewish ritual item in the form of "gift" + educated Jewish recipient = increased Jewish practice in the home. Increased Jewish practice in the home leads to more committed Jews, who, in turn, support the healthy future of American Jewish life.

This article considers synagogue shops in their formative years, between 1947 and 1965, as religious landscapes ripe with visual culture that embody aspects of postwar American Jewish ideology and culture.[3] Just as Silverman's gift suggestions from the 1930s can be read as texts of the interwar American Jewish community, so too can the objects for sale in the shops serve as legitimate, articulate sources for understanding features of postwar American Jewish life. Specifically, this article examines the contents of synagogue shops in the postwar period as sources for understanding (1) American Jewish denominationalism; (2) the intersection between American consumerism and an emerging American Jewish aesthetic; and (3) the evolving relationship between American Jews and the state of Israel.[4]

Setting the Stage for Synagogue Shopping

While synagogue gift shops would not become commonplace until more than a decade after Silverman's 1936 article, her arguments place the genesis of

American Jewish gift shopping in a dynamic period of American Jewish history, the 1930s and 1940s. Faced with a spiritual depression that mirrored the national economic condition, American Jewish leaders rallied their creative spirits to think "outside the box" for solutions to spiritual stagnation during this period. The results—pioneering programs in adult education, youth education, Jewish camping, and Jewish publishing—reflected the faith that American Jewish leaders put in the education of their laity as a means of religious regeneration.[5]

While myriad conditions, both ideological and pragmatic, led to the creation of day schools, summer camps, and adult education institutes during this period, two specific thoughts that influenced these developments also directly influenced the establishment of synagogue gift shops. First was the idea that American Jewish parents, in particular mothers, could rally a ritual renaissance through their own education and example of Jewish practice in the home. Second was the belief that child-centered activities and, above all, the education of Jewish children were the key to a vital Jewish future. Jewish leaders' and educators' attempts to affect a ritual resurgence in America served as a catalyst for the creation of synagogue shops. The idea that mothers should lead this renaissance placed the impetus for fashioning the required tools squarely in the hearts and minds of synagogue sisterhoods.

While the seeds for the synagogue shops were planted during the 1930s and 1940s, they only blossomed in the suburbs of the 1940s and 1950s. During World War II, the focus and resources of the American Jewish community, generally, and American synagogue sisterhoods, specifically, were directed toward a foreign rather than a domestic Jewish agenda. However, after the war, the famous postwar American religious revival provided new energy, new resources, and a newly engaged population to fuel many of the Jewish programs proposed before the war, including the gift shops.

In 1948, the task of organizing and promoting a sisterhood gift shop was made part of the national agenda of both the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (NFTS) and the Women's League for Conservative Judaism (Women's League).[6] Prior to 1948, there was one known synagogue gift shop in operation—a Reform sisterhood shop at congregation B'nai Israel in Augusta, Georgia.[7] Less than a decade later, the Women's League counted 530 shops among its affiliates; 85 percent of American Conservative synagogues supported gift shops by 1956.[8] The NFTS declared that the Judaica shop had become "a sisterhood institution" in Reform congregations by the end of the 1950s.[9]

The Women's Branch of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations also committed itself to assisting affiliates in establishing gift shops, albeit at a later date and to a lesser extent.[10] The 1962 booklet, *Women's Branch: Background, History, and Glimpse Into the Future*, indicates that the group assisted individual sisterhoods in establishing gift shops as both a source of revenue and an educational venture. However, the Women's Branch supported neither

national nor local gift shop committees, and very few records of national or local correspondence regarding the shops exist.[11] Thus, in this article, the bulk of primary source data and corresponding discussion of gifts and their meaning focuses on objects for sale in Reform and Conservative shops.

For Conservative and Reform sisterhoods, the establishment of gift shops was part of their campaign to make American Jewish households more ritually observant. Sisterhoods had spent the first half of the twentieth century trying to "Americanize" their Jewish immigrant members; now they were faced with the children of these immigrants, well versed in Americanism but mostly ignorant as to the form and content of Judaism. While the 1930s and 1940s provided sisterhood leaders with the time to contemplate new ritual education strategies, the postwar period became a testing ground for these strategies, including the gift shops.

To this end, both the NFTS and Women's League situated the gift shop, in their organizational hierarchies, under the rubric of education. The original NFTS statement on the shops recognized the founding theme and continuing *zeitgeist* of the shops: to establish a commercial classroom. "The purpose of the Book and Gift Shop is twofold: to supply the demand for gifts of Jewish content and to promote the sale of Jewish art and ceremonial objects for the home, the school and individuals on significant occasions."[12] Esther Fink, chair of the Women's League Gift Shop Committee, expanded on this thought in a May 1949 *Outlook* magazine column:

> Why should sisterhood be concerned with the gift shop?… Aside from helping the Hebrew School and the congregation and leading various drives and community projects through fundraising, the important objective of Sisterhood is to educate our women, and through them, our children, for Jewish living, and one way is through the gift shop.[13]

Clearly, both the Women's League and the NFTS saw the synagogue shops as part of their postwar educational program, meant to stimulate ritual and religion on the home front.

While the roots of the gift shop lay in the ceremonial revival of the 1930s, and the late 1940s saw their institutionalization as part of sisterhood educational programming, postwar demographics provided the impetus for the popularity and rapid spread of the shops in Reform and Conservative congregations. Suburbanization shaped synagogue shopping by creating room for the shops and their wares in newly constructed Jewish institutional and domestic space. The literal and ideological reconstruction of Judaism during this period, spurred by geographic mobility (to the suburbs, but also to Sunbelt cities such as Miami and Los Angeles), made space for the gift shop in American Jewish life.

Historian Lance Sussman estimates that of the approximately 4200 operational synagogues in the country today, most were built during the postwar

period or remodeled in the postwar style.[14] The suburban synagogue-building boom meant the establishment of thousands of new synagogues. The "new" synagogue embodied suburban values, orienting itself architecturally and programmatically toward a youth-oriented, recreationally directed, automobile society. To this end, these congregations boasted architectural innovations such as a separate religious school building, a social hall that was larger than the sanctuary, a central office, and a gift shop.[15] The suburban synagogue needed to mimic the functions of the former ethnic, urban neighborhood, providing community and services on one dynamic campus. Architectural guides and blueprints from the period attest to the place of the gift shop in these new synagogues.[16]

In addition to new institutional space, the postwar period saw the baby boom and suburban housing boom lead to the creation of new Jewish families and homes. Sisterhood leaders saw their new, young members as a direct link to the American Jewish home and future. Women's League gift shop chair Esther Fink confirmed this connection in a 1952 article:

> Our affiliated groups are attracting more young women today than ever before, mothers anxious to learn the Jewish way of life, so as to be able to impart it to their children. Through the gift shop and meetings programmed around it, young mothers are encouraged to buy and use the necessary ceremonial objects for Sabbath and festival observance, thus making their home more beautiful Jewishly and helping the children to accept and appreciate their Jewish heritage in day to day living.[17]

These young mothers were a bridge over which Jewish knowledge and tools could pass from the synagogue into the home.

Finally, we cannot ignore another feature of postwar American Jewish life that contributed to the emergence and popularity of synagogue shops: financial success. Urban and suburban, American Jews experienced an increase in material wealth during this period.[18] The economic expansion contributed to the sense of conspicuous consumption and display that fueled synagogue shopping.

Sisterhood gift shops emerged at a time of physical and ideological change in American Jewish history. As stated previously, the roots of the shops can be found in the American Jewish educational renaissance that first emerged in the 1930s; their institutionalization resulted from Conservative and Reform sisterhoods adopting aspects of this educational revival in the late 1940s; and the rapid growth of the shops can be attributed to postwar American Jewish demographics. Once in operation, the shops provide us with further historical evidence to mine. The shops themselves and the gifts that they sold were physical manifestations of ideological goals. An examination of merchandise reveals attitudes and agendas of American Jews at mid-century regarding denominationalism, American Jewish aesthetics, and the state of Israel.

Selling Denominationalism

"Material objects matter," explains scholar Ann Smart Martin, "because they are complex, symbolic bundles of social, cultural, and individual meanings fused into something we can touch, see, and own."[19] The objects sold in the synagogue shops functioned as such symbolic bundles. The decision to stock—even to manufacture—a specific object often reflects a particular stance regarding the practice of American Judaism. In other words, Reform temple shops made it a practice to sell items that facilitated the practice of home and temple rituals deemed important by Reform Jews, while Conservative synagogue shops sold items that reflected their ideology.

Reform Objects and Objectives

The NFTS' 1953 guide to gift shop operation, titled, *Your Sisterhood Judaica Shop*, illustrates the process by which gift shops reflected Reform ideology.[20] The cover of the guide features a young sisterhood member, quite possibly a mother, gesturing toward a shelving unit containing Judaica, attractively arranged. The Judaica, from bottom to top, left to right, includes:

Shelf 1:
NFTS calendar
Series of books enclosed by bookends (no titles visible)
Candelabra (holds two candles, probably meant for Shabbat)
Passover Plate

Shelf 2:
"Portfolio of Remembrances" book
Wine decanter
Spice box
Plaque featuring the Ten Commandments
Pair of candlesticks
Pair of candleholders

Shelf 3:
Etrog box[21]
Gragger (Purim noisemaker)
Hanukkah lamp
NFTS Uniongram[22]
Gragger

Shelf 4:
Series of books encased by bookends (One title visible: "RHR")
Framed photo of a young man, presumably a confirmand
"Certificate"

Shelf 5:
Set of candlesticks and holders
Three *kiddush* cups
Hanukkah lamp

First, consider the overall effect of the image. The two people pictured in the image are: (1) the sisterhood member—a young, fashionably dressed woman, quite possibly a mother, and (2) the young man, wearing a suit and a serious expression, probably a confirmand or a bar mitzvah.[23] In fact, the suited, somber boy is the visual center of the illustration. This young man is surrounded by Jewish books and ritual objects. By placing his image in such a context, the illustrator suggests a direct link between family ritual practice and the future of Judaism. The message here is that the purchase and use of Jewish objects can have a personal impact on your family, by allowing you the *nachas* (pleasure mixed with pride) of celebrating the bar mitzvah or confirmation of your son. Moreover, the bar mitzvah or confirmation is a significant step on the way to becoming a practicing Jewish adult. The image of mother and child on the front of the gift shop guide suggests that it is possible to revitalize Judaism by reintroducing festive and modern home ritual to the American Jewish family.

The individual ritual objects pictured on the cover also prove revealing. These objects supported rituals endorsed by the Reform movement at the time. The very first object on display, the NFTS calendar, not only provided a direct source of revenue to the sisterhood, it also served to organize the lives of Reform Jews according to Jewish time. The calendar supported an organized Jewish existence. A sisterhood member could make note of family, religious, and general community commitments. In addition, she could learn something about Jewish art or history, depending on the illustrations chosen for that particular year.[24]

The ceremonies and observances advocated by the Reform movement of the 1950s included the High Holidays, Shabbat, Hanukkah, Purim, and Passover. Reform gift shops carried items necessary to celebrate these occasions. The Reform movement's Joint Committee on Ceremonies, which included representatives from the rabbinic and congregational arms of the movement, launched a Shabbat appreciation campaign in the 1950s, which included publication of a new *kiddush* ceremony for the synagogue on Shabbat eve and the production, by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC),[25] of a *kiddush* cup for the home.[26] Thus, it is not surprising to see that the "model" gift shop included *kiddush* cups and several sets of candlesticks, encouraging customers to bring the light and joy of Shabbat into their homes. Similarly, the Hanukkah lamps pictured promoted the movement's relish of home ceremonials for the holiday that had become a December gift-giving tradition in the 1950s. The top-selling leaflet, "*Megillah* Ritual," produced by the Joint Committee on Ceremonials in the late 1940s, was supported by the presence of *graggers* in the display.

Although the books pictured in the gift shop do not have titles, it is clear from gift shop memos and guides that UAHC publications were an important part of shop stock. According to the Reform gift shop guide:

> Books and records of Jewish interest not only belong in a Judaica Shop but should be an important feature of the Judaica Shop. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations makes available, at an extraordinarily good discount, a display package of its most attractive books.[27]

Union prayer books were among the suggested stock for Shabbat and the High Holidays.[28] The 1960 gift shop guide even suggested a special March display in honor of the birthday of Isaac Mayer Wise and the founding of the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion. A list of appropriate items for such a display included party favors, Jewish historical dolls, and publications relating to Reform Judaism.[29] In all of these cases, material culture mirrored the movement. Objects reinforced the explicitly stated goals of Reform Judaism regarding holiday celebration.

Though none of the objects pictured on the guide's cover are specified as being Israeli in origin, a quick glance inside the guide at the list of suppliers for the objects pictured reveals a dedication to supporting Israel. The Reform movement's 1937 Columbus Platform affirmed the obligation of all Jews to aid in the building of Israel as a Jewish homeland. Objects for sale in the shops supported this position. Gift shop buyers are referred to the Israeli Gift Shop Service, Israel Coin Jewelry, and the Israel Music Foundation for Israeli imports to stock the shelves.[30]

The model gift shop reflected the Reform movement's embracing certain life cycle rituals as well. The Joint Committee on Ceremonials designed and distributed ten life cycle certificates in the early 1950s, including marriage, religious school, conversion, *berit milah* (ritual circumcision), naming of a daughter, bar mitzvah (but *not* bat mitzvah), cradle roll, confirmation, consecration (the ceremony honoring the beginning of a child's formal religious training), and burial.[31] These certificates' place in the movement was indicated by their location in the model gift shop display—on shelf four, the "life cycle shelf." The picture of the young man stands at the center of the shelf. Located just beside the picture of the bar mitzvah/confirmand, the certificate pictured most likely referred to one of the ten certificates from the Joint Committee on Ceremonials. On the other side of the young man stand several books that sisterhood leaders suggested as suitable gifts for a confirmand. Recommended titles included *Isaac Mayer Wise: Pioneer of American Judaism*, the story of the "founder" of Reform Judaism in America; *Justice and Judaism*, an introduction to social action, one of the fundamental principals of Reform Judaism; and *Remember the Days*, an album for photos and certificates.[32] Clearly, Reform Jewish gift shops sold ritual objects that encouraged ceremonies and events, even ideologies, promoted by the Reform movement. The aforementioned book titles informed readers of the founding principals of Reform Judaism and suggested social action as a Jewish value. The confirmation certificate indicates the significance of the confirmation ceremony for the movement. Finally, the emphasis on holiday and

life cycle events in the Reform gift shop reflected the movement's emphasis on these practices as core elements of Judaism in America.

Conservative Objects and Objectives

During this same postwar period, from 1947 to 1965, one was not likely to find references to purchasing or selling yarmulkes, *tallitot*, or *tefilin* in publications or shops associated with the Reform movement. These objects were, however, keystones in the Conservative shops. Conservative synagogue shops sold objects that encouraged the practice of rituals, holidays, and life cycle events endorsed by the Conservative movement.

A comparison between the Reform gift shop guides and the Conservative guides reveals several differences in recommended stock.[33] The checklist for basic stock listed in the Women's League guide differed from its Reform counterpart in its inclusion of ritual garb, including *tallitot*, *tallit* bags, yarmulkes, lace mantillas or "chapel caps" (head coverings for women), *tefilin*, and *tefilin* bags. The Conservative gift shop guides also suggested shops stock Conservative movement publications, including prayer books, children's books, and kosher cookbooks.

An examination of movement publications and individual shop records from this period demonstrates that the suppliers and gift shop buyers paid attention to ideological differences in marketing and purchasing stock.[34] They were, in fact, guided by Conservative ideology. The NFTS section of the Reform movement periodical, *American Judaism* magazine, did not contain one of the *tallit* ads that were a ubiquitous fixture in *Women's League Outlook*, the Conservative women's magazine. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, *Outlook* featured a shopping section that catered to gift shops and individual buyers, offering products as varied as herring and Hanukkah lamps. Pervasive throughout this section were advertisements for *tallitot:* "Attention gift shop chairmen! Have you seen the new 'form fitting' bar mitzvah tallis?" read an ad from ZionTalis in 1961.[35] A 1962 ad featured the phrase "ZionTalis means quality" superimposed over a listing of Conservative synagogues that ordered the product.[36] The *tallit,* an essential element in Conservative religious practice in the postwar period, was marketed to Conservative shops in a Conservative publication.

Inspection of individual shop records confirms this difference in stock. Among the shops studied, only Conservative stores advertised yarmulkes before 1965.[37] Photos reveal that Conservative shops also followed national guidelines by making *tallitot* and *tallit* bags available to their customers.[38] The fact that Conservative shops stocked *tallitot* and yarmulkes reflects an ideological goal (but not necessarily a reality) of the movement—the donning of this ritual garb by Conservative Jewish men.

Similarly, the inclusion of advertisements for kosher cookbooks in Conservative publications and the stocking of said books, as well as a few care-

fully chosen kosher accouterments, in Conservative shops reflects Conservative Judaism's goal of promoting the dietary laws among its congregants. The Women's League promoted its own publications, of course. Advertisements for *Kosher Cookery Unlimited* and, later, its "glamorous" sister publication *Kosher Parties Unlimited*, frequently appeared on the shopping pages of *Women's League Outlook*.[39] The shops also carried dishtowels with a cross-stitch design and the letters "M" for *milchig* and "F" for *fleischig*.[40] The Women's League gift shop guides suggested, and gift shop records attest to the fact, that Conservative shops stocked their bookshelves with other Conservative publications as well, including *The Three Pillars: Thought, Worship and Practice for the Jewish Woman* and *The Jewish Home Beautiful*. [41] These guidebooks instructed the Jewish homemaker on Conservative views regarding Jewish ceremony and ritual in the home, including dietary laws, festivals, and life cycle observances.

Conservative Judaism saw ritual garb and adherence to the dietary laws as essential to Jewish life, and this belief was reflected in the stock of their gift shops. Reform shops, like Reform Judaism, emphasized the cycle of the Jewish year, marketing objects for holidays and Shabbat. Such differences in stock are telling. These venues were not simply about selling any Jewish merchandise, but rather transmitting a message, an ideology created by the movement they represented.

Selling American Judaism

Striking similarities in the shops' stock also merit attention, because such similarities can potentially reveal larger American Jewish attitudes at midcentury. Herein, context proves as important as the contents of the shops when analyzing the messages that accompanied the material. By constructing the shops inside synagogues, naming them "gift" stores, and promoting a specific "American-Jewish" message via advertising and display, Reform and Conservative sisterhoods created a middle-class marketplace for an emerging American Jewish aesthetic.

Synagogue shops changed the nature of religious shopping for Jews in America. The very existence of the shops took the sale of home-based Jewish ritual items out of their traditional context, the urban Jewish bookshop, and placed them in a new arena—the synagogue, often the sparkling new suburban variety. This basic change in context signals a change in the meaning and purpose of the objects. Jewish bookstores operated in ethnic Jewish neighborhoods in America's major cities, where they catered to a traditionally religious crowd, selling mostly prayer books and commentaries, *tallitot* and *tefilin*. The mission of these stores was to provide traditional religious articles to traditionally religious people. Gift shops, however, served a different purpose. The sisterhood, via the gift shop, aimed to sell Judaica to a community that they hoped would revive Jewish observance in their homes. Gift shops were not marketing their

objects to traditionally religious Jews; rather, they wanted to sell their wares to young Jewish families who were interested in (re)connecting to a Conservative or Reform Jewish community through synagogue membership.

Young Jewish mothers were much more likely to visit their suburban synagogue than to visit an urban Jewish bookstore. They were also much more likely to have read the latest edition of *Good Housekeeping* or *Life* magazine than to have read a compendium of Jewish law. Thus, a key part of marketing the shops and their stock was couching them in the familiar context of American consumerism. Gift shops may have sold some of the exact same objects found in traditional Jewish bookstores, but in the context of the synagogue shop, these objects acquired a different meaning. In the synagogue gift shop, electric menorahs and chocolate seder plates were about creating a modern American Jewish identity—an identity that had as much to do with American middle-class notions of holiday celebration and home decoration as Jewish history and tradition.

The choice by both the Reform and Conservative sisterhood boards at the national level to name these shops "gift shops" reinforces the idea that the shops were meant to be new, middle class, and American-Jewish marketplaces. The American middle class at midcentury was "gaga" for gifts. *Good Housekeeping* consumer columnist Charlotte Montgomery wrote in 1956, "Everyday is somebody's birthday. True. It is also the day that someone has a baby, that others marry or 'warm' a new house or sail away on ship. We shop for gifts the year round."[42] Middle-class American women spent mental and physical energies on the process of gift giving. Why? As organizers of ritual events and holidays that occasioned presents, women became linked with gift buying and gift giving. Gift giving was also a way of maintaining social relations with friends and colleagues.

"Gift" shops, as understood by midcentury marketplace, were intended as a smaller shop inside a larger store that contained a "pre-selection of attractive merchandise that's tasteful, timesaving, and convenient."[43] Synagogue shops were organized along this model, as small shops within the synagogues where attractive Judaica could be found and purchased conveniently, for oneself and to give as gifts. Silverman's statement at the beginning of this article includes an interwar call for Jewish gifts that will echo and expand in the postwar period. General upward social and economic mobility led to increasingly opulent life cycle celebrations, and geographic mobility led to the creation of millions of new Jewish homes among American Jews. Consequently, the demand for store-bought Jewish gifts to honor these occasions increased.

At the most basic level, synagogue shops conveniently satisfied the demand for Jewish gifts. On a more complex plain, the shops staged contracts between shopper and recipient with both religious and social consequences. Naming them "gift" shops references the social and religious contract that a shopper enters

when buying a gift in the synagogue. The gift is meant to enrich Jewish life. When purchasing items in the synagogue "gift" shop for themselves and others, American Jewish women honored their responsibility for maintaining Jewish life by introducing a Jewish object into a home. Thus, the recipient received not just an object but also a message about the possibility of Jewish living. Gift theory asserts that within the tradition of gift giving there is an inherent sense of reciprocity felt by the receiver toward the giver. In this case, the recipient of a Jewish ceremonial object—a Star of David necklace, Hanukkah lamp, or a K'tonton children's book—is meant to feel obligated to use that object to live Jewishly in America. The "gift" in the gift shop is the acknowledgement of a present that reflected access to American consumer culture and encouraged a continued commitment to Jewish living.

Jewish women shopping in their synagogues expected to find merchandise that they could give or display with pride. American Jewish women were charged with the sensitive task of maintaining tradition while encouraging acculturation in their households. They sought from their synagogues practices and purchases that allowed them to navigate such identity issues. Purchases like a *mizrach* (decorated plaque hung on an eastern wall to indicate the direction of Jerusalem) designed by acclaimed artist Lea Halperin or the UAHC *kiddush* cup, noted for its modern design, seemed to offer the perfect synthesis, for they simultaneously promised to strengthen Judaism even as they signified the attainment of a comfortable American middle-class status. Gift shops often emphasized the modern, even futuristic, characteristics of the Jewish goods that they sold. For example, one of the most popular items sold by the shops in December was the plastic, electric window menorah.[44] This invention was delightful in the eyes of consumers, in part, because it was composed of that thoroughly modern material—plastic. Its electrical power source (as opposed to candlelight) was another up-to-date, attractive quality. Also, the electric menorah fit into the American Christmas season tradition of twinkling lights. Through the gift shop, Jewish women could embrace middle-class consumerism *and* Judaism; they could simultaneously be a part of the December holiday season (by lighting the lights) and stand apart from it (by displaying the menorah).

Finally, similar styles of promotion and display in the Reform and Conservative shops reveal the synthesis of American and Jewish life that sisterhoods were championing during this period. Through the shops, sisterhood leaders hoped to educate Jewish women about the unique beauty of their religious observance, while at the same time, reassuring them that such observances were as festive, as culturally significant, and as doable as any other American, Christian holiday. American synagogue shops emphasized the congruence of American and Jewish life though skillful use of context and content.

In this endeavor, the shops were unquestionably influenced by the reigning American Jewish religio-domestic guide at midcentury, *The Jewish Home*

Beautiful.[45] *The Jewish Home Beautiful*, published in 1941 by the Women's League, provided a script for Jewish home observance.[46] The script was presented in the form of a pageant in which Jewish mothers and wives were the principal actors, and a cycle of tables set with festivity and tradition for each Jewish holiday were the props. The authors recognized that Jewish mothers had a zeal for pageantry, which had too long sought inspiration from American Christian sources: "The attractive settings offered by our large department stores and women's magazines on Valentines Day, Halloween, Christmas, and other non-festive Jewish days have captured the hearts of many of our women who either through lack of knowledge or imagination have failed to explore the possibilities of our own traditions."[47] The authors and publisher of *The Jewish Home Beautiful* sought to inspire American Jewish women with knowledge and imagination, thus fashioning a class of American Jewish home decorators.

American Jewish women—especially young mothers, new to their roles as home decorators, religious educators, and social directors—eagerly consumed this script for American-Jewish life. They literally bought *The Jewish Home Beautiful* concept and book.[48] The synagogue gift shop made both readily available.

Both *The Jewish Home Beautiful* ideology and the synagogue gift shop promoted the repackaging of Jewish holidays in an American consumer context. The most striking example of this was with the holiday of Hanukkah. While neither *The Jewish Home Beautiful* nor the gift shops invented "Hanukkah, American style," they certainly expanded and capitalized on the trend.[49] The Hanukkah shopping season was touted as the busiest time of year in the American synagogue gift shop, as shoppers took advantage of longer store hours to purchase Hanukkah gift-wrap, decorations, tableware, candles, menorahs, and, of course, presents. December synagogue bulletins throughout the 1950s were filled with gift shop advertisements attesting to the popularity of the holiday in the synagogue gift shop.[50] "Are you a smart shopper?" asked the Valley Jewish Community Center Bulletin in December 1957. "This year all the smart shoppers we know don't spend valuable time riding the May Company escalator from pre-teens to toys and back up to linens. No siree! They found they can stop and shop at the Gift Shop."[51] The ad continued with suggestions for everyone on your "Hanukkah shopping list": an apron for Grandma, a Hanukkah card for Grandpa, personalized stationary for your teenager, books, dreidels, games, and *gelt* for the *kinder*, and a beautiful seder plate, menorah, or lovely Israeli import for Mom and Dad.[52]

This advertisement is a fascinating example of how American Jews both appropriated Christmas traditions and created December gift-giving traditions of their own. Including grandparents and parents on the present list was an act inspired by the American Christmas tradition of family gift exchange. Hanukkah traditionally involved the giving of small gifts, usually money, to

children. Jewish children did not historically reciprocate by giving presents to parents and grandparents. American Jews expanded the Hanukkah celebration to include the exchange of gifts among family members. American synagogue gift shops hoped to influence the nature of these gifts. By encouraging the purchase of *Jewish* gifts for Hanukkah, the gift shop sales staff differentiated Hanukkah from Christmas. Christian children did not generally receive religious gifts for Christmas; they received secular gifts in Christmas-themed wrap. By suggesting dreidels and Jewish-themed games as Hanukkah presents, the gift shop staff was carrying out its mission to supply Jewish objects for the Jewish home. Clearly, the gift shop adopted and adapted American Christmas sales techniques—the creation of a list of presents, the countdown of shopping days until the holiday, the extended holiday hours—in an effort to appeal to American Jewish families surrounded by December holiday hype.

Similarly, through display and advertising in the shops, sisterhoods encouraged Jewish women to give and use Jewish ceremonial objects in nonreligious, American contexts. In this way, they Americanized Judaica. For example, both Reform and Conservative shops advocated special gift shop installations in honor of American holidays. Lincoln's and Washington's birthdays, Thanksgiving, Mother's Day, and Father's Day were causes for the creation of special displays. For Thanksgiving, advised the Reform gift shop guide, display all manner of hostess gifts. Bring an ashtray from Israel or a bottle of kosher wine to your Thanksgiving table. Books dealing with great American personalities from the American Revolution, Jewish and non-Jewish, were deemed appropriate to highlight in a display for the presidents' birthdays.[53]

While these holidays were not part of the Jewish year, they were important milestones in the American experience. *The Jewish Home Beautiful* advocated the celebration of these American holidays, and the gift shops, in turn, created displays of books and gifts to promote them. These displays domesticated Judaica by changing its intended context, while at the same time reminding consumers that these two identities—American and Jewish—were compatibly linked. Jews fought alongside non-Jews in the American Revolution, and the kosher wine can sit next to the non-kosher variety on the Thanksgiving table.

Finally, perhaps the most striking and significant sales similarity between Reform and Conservative shops was their promotion of objects from Israel. The efforts of the shops to fit Israeli merchandise into an American context permit a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between ideology and object in the synagogue shops.

Selling Israel

The American synagogue gift shop introduced countless American Jews to Israeli culture and life. By making Bezalel—the premier school of Israeli art and design—as accessible as Bloomingdales, the American synagogue gift shop provided an opportunity for American Jews to encounter the Holy Land without



Left: *National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (NFTS) art calendar for the Hebrew year 5716 (1955–56).* Right: Let's Talk Shop*, 1960.*

(Courtesy Women of Reform Judasim collection, American Jewish Archives)



Sisterhood members in the Judaica Shop, Temple Sinai Sisterhood, Oakland, CA. The saleswomen are, left to right: *Mrs. Leon Bloomberg, Chairwoman, Mrs. George Kantor, and Mrs. Werfel, Sisterhood President. Customers are Mrs. Alfred Gross and daughter, Goldie.* American Judaism *VI, n. 2 (Chanuko, 1956): 30.*

Below: *A photo illustration of an "ideal" American Jewish Hanukkah celebration.* American Judaism *VI, n. 2 (Chanuko, 1956): cover.*

Right: *Vogue of Israel advertisement.* American Judaism *XI, n. 2 (Winter, 1961): 46.*





leaving home.[54] Almost without exception, Reform and Conservative synagogue gift shops counted Israeli patina menorahs and *mezuzot*, olivewood ashtrays, letter openers, and coins fashioned into key chains and jewelry as part of their inventory in the 1950s and 1960s. These objects and the context in which they were sold reveal a multiplicity of messages about the postwar American Jewish home and the then-newly established Jewish homeland.

The American synagogue gift shop introduced an unprecedented venue for the sale of Israeli objects.[55] Even as technology made travel easier, only a relatively small subset of American Jews could go to Israel to purchase a plaque from Bezalel, a bottle of Shemen olive oil, or a postcard depicting a holy site. In contrast, the synagogue gift shop was a much cheaper, safer, more frequently visited destination for American Jews. By consistently stocking and promoting the sale of Israeli objects, the gift shop took the Holy Land souvenir out of the realm of the extraordinary—available only to those with the resources, spiritual and physical, to travel to Israel—and into the realm of the ordinary American Jewish synagogue. By changing the context in which the items were sold, the shops transformed the cultural consequences of the Holy Land souvenir. Moving an olivewood *mezuzah* from a *shuk* (outdoor marketplace) in Jerusalem to a shelf in a synagogue gift shop in Cleveland meant more than a transfer of location. While the *mezuzah* continued to represent the materials of the land of the Bible and the industry of the new state, its position in the American synagogue gift shop also says something about American Jewish life and the American Jewish home.

Historians Beth Wenger and Jeffrey Shandler note that, "the most frequent and intimate encounters with the Holy Land took place in family homes. Ritual and decorative objects from Palestine domesticated the exotic and spiritually charged Holy Land, making it a familiar presence in daily life."[56] The synagogue gift shop served as the primary outlet for the sale of these objects to American Jews. More Israeli objects traveled from the Middle East to the American Jewish living room via the American synagogue gift shop than any other route during the 1950s and 1960s. Author Linda Mack Schloff remembers the pervasive presence and cultural consequences of Israeli objects in Midwestern sisterhood shops:

> A panoply of brass and copper Israeli products began being imported and sold in synagogue gift shops during the 1950s/60s. Jewish families could, by buying these and other items, express their pride in and identify with those Jews who were re-building the ancient homeland. The message is that one can be both Jewish and modern, both ethnic and American, upper middle class and somehow an Israeli pioneer. [57]

The synagogue gift shop created an unprecedented marketplace for the sale of Israeli objects to American Jews. This outlet provided a safe, familiar, easily

accessible venue in which American Jews could discover and support the new Jewish state. In addition, by creating space on their shelves for these products, the gift shop also hoped to forge a place for an Israeli presence in the living rooms of American Jews.

As suppliers of Jewish ceremonial objects, gift shops reflected the ideology of the movement they represented. Given these circumstances, one might have expected to discover more fervently Zionist objects—political or military memorabilia, for example—in Conservative shops, and to see in Reform shops a selection of more secular stock—for example, an olivewood ashtray. Thus it is surprising that the evidence demonstrates strong support of Israeli craft by both the NFTS and the Women's League as early as the 1920s. In fact, the gift shops are not notable for their differences in selection or marketing of Israeli objects, but rather for the striking similarity in the objects sold and the marketing message used to promote their sale. This similarity results from the fact that the display and promotion of Israeli objects in the American synagogue gift shops of the 1950s and 1960s had as much to do with the establishment of a Jewish home in suburban America as it had to do with the establishment of a Jewish home in the Middle East. Synagogue sisterhoods and later gift shops did not promote or sell Zionist propaganda, they sold decorative and ceremonial objects from Israel. Gift shop organizers packaged both general merchandise and Israeli objects in a way that promoted the congruence of American middle-class and Jewish values. By marketing Israeli objects as part of the "American Jewish Home Beautiful," the American synagogue gift shop forged a place for Israel in the American Jewish home.

The earliest efforts of American sisterhood leaders to acquire goods from Israel reflected both a desire to support the Israeli economy and a wish that this support should encourage and enrich American Jewish domestic space. At its Seventh Assembly in 1927, the NFTS resolved that it should encourage its constituents to take an interest in the work of the Bezalel Academy, "Not merely for the encouragement of the work of Jewish artists, but in order that appreciation of the beautiful symbols of our faith may become more widespread."[58] Support for Bezalel was not only an endorsement of Jewish artists working in Palestine, but also an opportunity to infuse the American community with Jewish art appreciation. The correspondence of Stella Freiberg, president of the NFTS, further supports this early commitment on the part of the sisterhood leadership to support Bezalel as a catalyst for the creation of a modern American Jewish Home Beautiful. Freiberg wrote to her affiliate presidents in 1927 that she hoped by the end of the year that every sisterhood member would be a proud possessor of an object made at the Bezalel Academy.[59] In Freiberg's words, "Bezalel's task is to introduce beauty and to develop a taste for things beautiful among our people in hope that the best and most intelligent of our people and those who can afford will join as members of Bezalel."[60] Freiberg encouraged

support of Bezalel as a means of developing a taste for beautiful Jewish belongings among her constituents. She did not introduce Bezalel as Zionist art but rather as bourgeois Jewish art, art that emanated from the only *professional* academy dedicated to the production of Jewish art. As such, it belonged in an elegant Jewish home. Freiberg's support of Bezalel was not based on a desire to build a Jewish national state but rather to build a fine art collection in the homes of American Jews. Resolutions were passed and letters were circulated to constituents across the nation under the signatures of Freiberg and Bezalel founder Boris Shatz that promoted Bezalel as a means of introducing Jewish art and culture into the American home.

Both the gift shop movement and the state of Israel were founded in the late 1940s. With the establishment of the state, supply and demands for affordable Israeli goods increased. Frieberg's idea of a Bezalel piece in every home—only the best and the brightest of Jewish artisans in *The Jewish Home Beautiful*—wavered as mass-produced Israeli objects became commonplace. Wall clocks depicting the twelve tribes or the Hebrew alphabet, pitchers featuring the sands of Eilat, and replicas of ancient coins fashioned into jewelry and key chains became common items for sale in synagogue shops. Just as the NFTS leaders promoted the sale of Bezalel as enriching the American Jewish residence, Reform and Conservative gift shop leaders promoted the sale of these new Israeli objects as a means of enriching both the Israeli economy and the American Jewish home. The bourgeois, middle-class home in the expanding suburbs of the 1950s required these mass-produced objects. It simply was not possible, from a production standpoint, to advocate an expensive, limited edition Bezalel piece for every home. The suburbs were not about the best and the brightest, but rather about attaining a certain sameness of middle-class life. Bezalel began to produce prints and plaques in large quantities, making the Bezalel name accessible to greater numbers of people. *The Jewish Home Beautiful*, according to Reform and Conservative sisterhood leaders, required that something from Israel grace its shelves, but it did not have to be something as outstanding as an original Bezalel piece.

"There should definitely be an Israeli corner," wrote gift shop guru Esther Fink in a March 1953 *Women's League Outlook* article.[61] "It is urgent that we aid the struggling state by buying its exports. All things from Israel have artistic beauty," she wrote.[62] Fink's attitude is certainly more democratic than Freiberg's just a few decades earlier. Such tolerance for the decorating potential of a wide range of Israeli goods was not without critics. Art critic Alfred Werner, for example, decried this development and waged a back-to-Bezalel campaign in the pages of *American Judaism* magazine. Werner authored a piece titled, "What is Good Jewish Art?" in which he advised the reader that "tact, taste, and tenacity" were required to add Jewish flavor to one's home.[63] "We must learn to avoid the saccharine that often passes for Jewish art—bearded

patriarchs, 'cute' genre scenes depicting life in the shtetl and vistas of the Holy Land that are little more than enlarged color photographs," he admonished.[64] What, according to Werner, was worthy art for the Jewish home? He named a few individual artists working in America, but his highest accolades were reserved for Shatz's school.

Bezalel arts and crafts were professional, beautiful, and a tasteful addition to any Jewish home.[65] However, sisterhood gift shop leaders paid little attention to critics like Werner. They sold brass menorahs and candlesticks, olivewood ashtrays and letter openers, because these decorative objects were widely available. They were also affordable and familiar to the American consumer. They mirrored other sorts of decorative objects for sale in larger consumer markets. Just as *House Beautiful* advocated the purchase of one sort of ashtray or pitcher as a hostess gift, the synagogue shop could offer a Jewish or even an Israeli version of the same.

The Women's League's gift shop bible, *Guide for the Judaica Shop Committee* (c.1950), confirms the sales strategy of selling Israeli objects for every American Jewish occasion: "Ceremonial Objects and Gift Shop should help to support the economy of Israel by promoting the sale of Israeli articles for use in the home or as gifts for bar and bat mitzvahs, showers, weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, family occasions, or as hostess gifts," reads the guide.[66] There was not an American occasion for which an Israeli object could not serve as an appropriate gift. *Across the Threshold*, a guide for the Jewish homemaker published by the Women's League in 1959, offered specific suggestions for gift giving. The published gift suggestions at the end of each holiday segment in this book confirmed that the American synagogue sisterhoods promoted Israeli objects as an appropriate choice for almost any American celebration. Looking for a baby gift? Purchase an Israel bond. Rosh Hashanah treat? Israeli candy. Bar/bat mitzvah gift? Israeli stamps or Israeli anniversary coins made into medallions or paperweights make perfect gifts.[67]

The gift shops were not trying to market *objets d'art* to an exclusive audience; they sought to bring Jewish objects into the typical American Jewish home. In this manner, Israeli objects became part of the overall *zeitgeist* of the shops to provide Jewish families with the ritual and decorative objects necessary for a rich Jewish life. They supported a burgeoning Israeli economy, enhanced the American Jewish life cycle and holiday celebrations, and, they hoped, whet the appetites of American Jews for a more definitive American Jewish aesthetic. Women's League president Sarah Kopelman summed up this message in her May 1949 president's address:

> Eventually we hope that this infiltration of tourist arts will affect the decor of our Jewish homes, and lovely Bezalel plaques and silver menorahs will take the place of the Meissen and the Minton.[68] But more than that we dare

> to dream that here in America our people, relieved of the terrific pressure of fighting for the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth might now turn their strength and capability inward and concern itself with developing and fostering a Jewish culture that shall be in many ways a distinctly American Jewish culture.[69]

Clearly the early efforts of Reform and Conservative sisterhoods to make Israeli goods available to the American Jewish public involved fostering the creation of a vibrant Jewish state as well as fostering the creation of a vibrant American Jewish home.

Recognizing the important link between sales and American Jewry, the firms that manufactured and supplied Israeli goods promoted their stock in such a way that connected Israeli souvenirs and American style. For example, at the 1948 biennial of the NFTS, Mrs. Miriam Jackson, president of the Palestine Galleries for Arts and Crafts, made a presentation to the assembled women, urging them to buy items made in Israel to sell in their gift shops. In her presentation, Jackson appealed both to the educational goals of the shops and the middle-class marketing message mentioned above: "Without the gift shops our program will never go forward. You will also introduce Jewish culture to the average home where today the type of ceremonial article in use is one hidden after serving its purpose."[70] With this remark, Jackson appealed to the didactic goals of the shops by suggesting that Israeli objects could serve as a vehicle for moving Jewish culture into the American Jewish home. Jackson then went on to compare the types of Israeli objects available from her company to items from high-end furniture and design firms like Jensens or Plummers: "The colors, the glazes employed on the ceramics, the Tiffany green finish on the bronzes are outstanding," she related.[71] Jackson concluded with a shameless name-dropping serenade in which she stated that *Mademoiselle, The American Home, Glamour, Vogue* and *House Beautiful* had all been contacted to advertise stories and pictures of available merchandise from her company.[72] Israeli exports belong in chic magazines and stylish shops, according to Jackson. Menorahs, ashtrays, and letter openers were up to date *and* Jewish, spiritual *and* stylish.

Advertisements from American Jewish newspapers and magazines from the 1950s and 1960s further supported the effort on the part of Israeli goods suppliers to market Israeli objects to gift shops as both an investment in Israel's economy and the American Jewish domestic economy. The Israel Trade Commission, for example, consistently marketed Israeli gladiolus bulbs to sisterhood gift shop buyers in the pages of *Outlook* and *American Judaism*.[73] Gladioli are not native plants of Israel; they are, however, bulbs that gladden the American garden. Many sisterhoods, particularly in the South, made a bulb sale their major fundraiser of the year. By marketing gladiolus bulbs to the synagogue gift shop, the Israel Trade Commission created an Israeli product to please the American Jewish consumer. The flower fit right into the American front yard,

with the perennial potential for providing its owner with a feeling of pride in her American garden and the new Jewish state. Another Israeli goods supplier was Vogue of Israel sought to appeal to Americans by employing a name that is synonymous with the height of western fashion and by providing a product for formal occasions. Vogue of Israel offered a variety of evening bags for purchase in *American Judaism*.[74]

The above evidence attests to the efforts of suppliers and buyers to place Israeli products in American Jewish homes. While these firms and shops used American popular culture references such as Tiffany's and Plummers and Vogue, they were careful not to completely empty the objects of their foreign flavor. The Israeli souvenir had to maintain a degree of the exotic; if it became too familiar, too American, why purchase it? Why not just buy an American evening bag, menorah, or ashtray? In her study of the souvenir, Susan Stewart argues that the souvenir is scandalous. It possesses the romance of contraband because it is removed from its "natural" location.[75]

A close analysis of a popular object sold in the shops during this period—a brass patina menorah manufactured in Israel—demonstrates the delicate balance between exotic and familiar that made Israeli objects so appealing to the consumer. A 1949 patina menorah from Israel references both the biblical significance of the Holy Land and the creation of culture in a new Jewish state. Literally, patina is the fine green rust that appears on copper or bronze as a result of oxidation. Patina also implies a weathered surface, generally considered to be of aesthetic value. Ancient metals—coins, vessels, and jewelry—often sport a patina, which alludes to authenticity and mystery. In the American Jewish lexicon of the postwar period, however, patina takes on a whole new meaning, namely anything green that comes from Israel. The promotion of patina was very common in the synagogue gift shop. "The gift shop has patina bronze menorahs from Israel," advertised the Wilshire Boulevard Temple bulletin. "Letter openers in brass and patina have arrived," announced the Temple Emanu-El chronicle. "Green patina is available for purchase," declared the Adath Israel Sisterhood yearbook.[76] Despite the fact that these objects were products of a brand new state, the gift shop marketed them to American Jews as patina, a word that suggested the ancient bond of the Jewish people with the Holy Land. At the same time, the purchase of an Israeli menorah made in 1949 was a celebration of a burgeoning creative economy in Israel. Buying Israeli objects, such as the patina menorah, meant supporting the Israeli economy and thus ensuring an Israeli future.

The context in which the patina menorah was sold—the American synagogue gift shop in the postwar period—also contributes to its meaning and impact. As part of the inventory of the shops, a 1949 Israeli patina menorah became an acceptable decoration in the American Jewish Home Beautiful. The gift shop of the 1950s and 1960s was concerned with educating Jewish women

on the creation of a modern Jewish home that was not only spiritually enlightened but also solidly middle class. What sort of educational potential does the menorah deliver in such a context? A patina menorah from Israel comes packed with potential for encouraging the celebration of Hanukkah and for establishing private attachments to the new Jewish state. Israeli objects in the American synagogue gift shop did not represent a fervent Zionist platform; they suggested a different, but important, more palatable and potentially more far-reaching message, namely that the enlightened American Jewish suburban home should include objects from the state of Israel. In this manner, the American synagogue gift shop suggested a space in which American Jews could incorporate the Jewish state into their lives, without compromising their Americanness.

Conclusion

Between 1947 and 1965, a sector of American Jewish sisterhoods channeled prewar consumer habits and the goals of the domestic Judaism movement into a postwar effort to modernize and energize Judaism. This effort, fueled by the educational renaissance of the early twentieth century, the increasing responsibility of Jewish women for the healthy future of Judaism, the complex processes of suburbanization, and the agency of material goods, resulted in the creation of a new venue, the American synagogue gift shop.

The synagogue gift shop movement represents the efforts of Jewish women, in this case sisterhood leaders, to bridge the gap between synagogue and home, America and Judaism. They hoped to do this by providing a place wherein the elements that composed all of these locales and identities could combine and emerge as an American Jewish style that American Jewish women could purchase and adopt with pride. Thus, these seemingly mundane shops around the corner from the synagogue sanctuary actually illustrate themes central to American Jewish life. Studying synagogue shopping can reveal elements of gender, class, and ritual among postwar American Jews.

Consideration of the objects that synagogue gift shops offered to American Jews gives shape to specific issues of American Jewish identity and community in the postwar period. Calendars, yarmulkes, and patina menorahs suggested strategies for maintaining American Judaism. When placed in context of the shops, they can reveal specific denominational, community, and cultural goals.

Joellyn Wallen Zollman completed her Ph.D. in 2002 from Brandeis University. She has worked with the Jewish material culture collections at the Smithsonian Institution, the Skirball Museum, and the American Jewish Historical Society. Dr. Zollman is frequently a lecturer in the History Department at San Diego State University and is currently teaching a class in Art, Religion, and Material Culture at UCSD.

Notes

[1]Althea O. Silverman, "Jewish Gifts for Jewish Occasions," *Women's League Outlook* 6, n. 3 (March, 1936): 7.

[2]Ibid., 7.

[3]Silverman's program of "Jewish giving," while formulated in the interwar period, would not see fruition until the American Jewish community refocused its energies on domestic concerns after World War II. While research has yet to reveal the first synagogue shop, the earliest known American synagogue gift shop was in operation as of 1947 in congregation B'nai Israel (Reform) in Augusta, Georgia.

[4]For a full historical account of the American synagogue gift shop, see Joellyn Wallen Zollman, "Shopping For a Future: A History of the American Synagogue Gift Shop," doctoral dissertation (Brandeis University, 2002).

[5]For a summary of educational and synagogue innovations during this period, see Beth Wenger, *New York Jews and the Great Depression: Uncertain Promise* (New Haven: Yale, 1996), 166–196; and Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 243–255 and 267–271.

[6]The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (NFTS) was founded in 1913 as the national organization for Reform sisterhoods. The Women's League for Conservative Judaism (WL) was founded in 1918 as the national organization of Conservative sisterhoods.

[7]"Bright Ideas," *Topics and Trends* (March-April, 1947): 2; Women of Reform Judaism Papers 73/69/IV, The American Jewish Archives (AJA), Cincinnati, Ohio.

[8]Mrs. Max (Esther) Fink, "Ceremonial and Gift Shop Committee Report," *Proceedings of the Biennial Convention of the National Women's League of the United Synagogue of America* (Kiamensha, New York, 11–14 November 1956): 19.

[9]Report of the Department of Religion and Education, 14 April 1959, 73/43/Series E, Circular Files, Department of Religion and Education Records, 1956–1961, AJA.

[10]The Women's Branch of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America (WB) was founded in 1926 as the national organization of Orthodox sisterhoods.

[11]This lack of centralized organization regarding the shops could be due to a number of factors, including: (1) the general decentralization of the Orthodox community during this period; (2) the reliance upon traditional Jewish bookstores among the Orthodox community for its ceremonial needs; (3) the fact that this denomination takes the most strict stance regarding observance, thus the Orthodox may have been more likely to already possess ritual objects (in contrast to Reform and Conservative sisterhoods, who were interested in reintroducing ceremony into the lives of Jewish families).

[12]Stella H. Freiberg, "Report of the National Committee on Jewish Ceremonials and Art," *Proceedings of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods*, 36th Annual Report (Cincinnati, Ohio: 31 October 1948), 164, 73/1/V, AJA.

[13]Esther Fink, "The Sisterhood Gift Shop," *Women's League Outlook* 19, n. 4 (May, 1949): 15.

[14]Lance Sussman, "The Suburbanization of American Judaism as Reflected in Synagogue Building and Architecture, 1945–75," *American Jewish History* 75 (September, 1985): 32 and fn3.

[15]Ibid., 31, 32, 42.

[16]See, for example, Peter Blake, ed., *An American Synagogue for Today and Tomorrow: A Guidebook to Synagogue Design and Construction* (New York: UAHC, 1954), 289–301.

[17]Mrs. Max Fink, "Is Your Gift Shop Succeeding?" *Women's League Outlook* 23, n. 1 (September, 1952): 27.

[18]Edward Shapiro, *A Time for Healing: American Jewry Since World War II* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 155–157.

[19]Ann Smart Martin, "Makers, Buyers, and Users: Consumerism as a Material Culture Framework," *Winterthur Portfolio: Journal of American Material Culture* 28, n. 3 (Summer/Autumn, 1993): 141.

[20]Carolene Wachenheimer, *Your Sisterhood Judaica Shop* (Cincinnati: NFTS, 1953), cover.

[21]We can be fairly certain that this is an *etrog* (citrus) container and not a *tzedakah* (charity) box as, interestingly, neither the Reform nor the Conservative gift shop guides published before 1970 mention *tzedakah* boxes as an item to stock. Thus, it follows that the practice of giving a *tzedakah* box as a gift for occasions such as bar/bat mitzvahs or weddings is a more recent custom.

[22]Uniongrams are, according to the Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ, formerly NFTS) website, "the perfect Jewish message bearer for all occasions." Synagogue gift shops sell these cards locally, and through the WRJ national offices, as a means to raise funds for the WRJ Youth, Education, and Special Projects committee. For a useful history of the uniongram, see http://www.womenofreformjudaism.org/Yes-fund/uniongrams/.accessed (accessed on 1 November 2007).

[23]While the Reform movement's fondness for confirmation would suggest that this young man is most likely a confirmand, his gender and the time period allow for the possibility of a bar mitzvah, as bar mitzvah ceremonies had become commonplace in the American Reform community by the 1950s.

[24]While an exhaustive analysis of the iconography of the NFTS art calendar is not within the scope of this study, it has been my observation that the calendar made regular use of Reform-friendly themes, especially the congruence of American life and Jewish values. For example, the 1950 calendar featured significant American Reform Jews and tourist attractions; the 1951 calendar featured photographs of recently constructed American Jewish synagogues; the 1952 calendar featured photographs of the Reform movement's House of Living Judaism in New York; and the 1954 calendar celebrated the American Jewish tercentenary. Generally speaking, when working with themes outside of the obviously "American," the calendar's staff privileged art that reflected ceremonials endorsed by the movement and/or biblical themes.

[25]The Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) is the national umbrella organization for Reform congregations in America.

[26]See Louis Witt, "Report of the Joint Committee on Ceremonies," in *Central Conference of American Rabbis: Fifty-Eighth Annual Convention: June 24–June 28, 1947*, ed. Isaac Marcuson (Philadelphia: Maurice Jacobs, 1948), 204.

[27]Gertrude Rom, *Let's Talk Shop: Your Sisterhood Judaica Shop* (Cincinnati: NFTS, 1960), 73/36/1, AJA. While the Reform guides always recommended the UAHC's publications, they did not do so to the exclusion of other publishers. However, in the 1953 guide, the author urged the gift shop committee to discuss non-UAHC book titles with the rabbi or educational director before ordering. With this caveat, the guide included contact information for Bloch Publishing; The Jewish Publication Society; Behrman House; Farrar, Straus and Young; KTAV Publishing; and Universal Jewish Encyclopedia. See Wachenheimer, 4–5.

[28]Rom, 7 and Wachenheimer, 7.

[29]Rom, 16.

[30]Wachenheimer, 4–6.

[31]Max Reichler, "Report of the Joint Committee on Ceremonies," in *Central Conference of American Rabbis: Sixty-Second Annual Convention, June 19–June 24 1951*, New London, Connecticut (Philadelphia: Maurice Jacobs, 1952), 139. There was not a marriage certificate as the committee also produced a *ketubbah*, or marriage contract, separately.

[32]National Office to Local and District Sisterhood Presidents, "Gifts for the Confirmand," 20 May 1959, 73/42/Series E, Circular Files, Department of Religion and Education Records, AJA.

[33]Women's League, *Guide for the Judaica Shop Committee* (New York: Women's League, before 1960), 8. Women's League Archives, New York, New York.

[34]While there are not enough extant records from Orthodox congregations to make an accurate comparison of Orthodox gift shops to those shops supported by Conservative and Reform sisterhoods, examination of advertisements in *Orthodox Jewish Life* magazine reveals several ceremonial objects not seen in the pages of *American Judaism* or *Women's League Outlook*, including the "Intermatic Shabbath [sic] Clock" that turns lights and appliances on and off without human intervention, the "only" prefabricated packaged sukkah, and beautiful, "authentic and approved" wigs and hairpieces. See *Orthodox Jewish Life* XXV, n. 5 (June, 1958): 2; *Orthodox Jewish Life* XXIII, n. 5 (July–August, 1956): 5; and *Orthodox Jewish Life* XVII, n. 4 (April, 1950): 86.

[35]ZionTalis advertisement, *Women's League Outlook* 32, n. 2 (Winter, 1961): 28.

[36]ZionTalis advertisement, *Women's League Outlook* 32, n. 3 (March, 1962): 29.

[37]See, *West Oaks Lane JCC Bulletin* 8, n. 8 (April, 1959), West Oaks Lane Papers, Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; *Germantown Jewish Centre Bulletin* (May 10, 1958), Germantown Jewish Centre Papers, Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; *Valley Jewish Community Center (VJCC) Bulletin* 10, n. 2 (October, 1953), Adat Ari El Papers, Congregation Adat Ari El, North Hollywood, California.

[38]As the photographs are often reproductions, it is more difficult to make out smaller, less recognizable objects, such as *mizrachim*. For examples of *tallitot* on display in individual gift shops, see the following photographic sources: "Photo: Gift Shop of Sisterhood Temple Beth El Rockaway Park," *Women's League Outlook* (May, 1952): 18; "Portrait of Gift Shop, Har Zion Temple, Philadelphia," *Women's League Outlook* 23, n. 3 (March, 1952): 11; "Mrs. Harry Fox, Mrs. Charles Newman and Mrs. Max Tapper," Photo of Valley Jewish Community Center Gift Shop, *VJCC Yearbook* (1951): 38, Adat Ari El Papers, Congregation Adat Ari El, North Hollywood, California; and "Photo: Gift Shop," Germantown Jewish Centre Papers, Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

[39]Cookbook advertisement, *Women's League Outlook* 32, n. 2 (Winter, 1961): 29; Cookbook advertisement. *Women's League Outlook* 35, n. 4 (Summer, 1965): inside back cover.

[40]Mrs. Baruch I. Treiger, "We Come Bearing Gifts," *Women's League Outlook* 21, n. 4 (May, 1951): 13.

[41]Ibid., 21.

[42]Charlotte Montgomery, "Time: The Present, Subject: The Presents," *Good Housekeeping* (December, 1956): 13.

[43]Ibid., 13.

[44]For illustrations of the electric menorahs sold by the shops, see Holiday Bell Corporation advertisement, *American Judaism* IX, n. 2 (Hanukkah, 1959): 14; North American Electric Lamp Company advertisement, *American Judaism* IX, n. 2 (December, 1959): 34; KTAV Publishing House advertisement, *Women's League Outlook* 33, n.1 (September, 1962): 31. For an example of an electric *yahrzeit* light, see Aerolux Light Corporation advertisement, *American Judaism* XIII, n. 1 (Fall, 1963): 39.

[45]For a more complete analysis of *The Jewish Home Beautiful* home decorating philosophy, see Jenna Weissman Joselit, "The Jewish Home Beautiful," in *The American Jewish Experience*, ed. Jonathan Sarna (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1997), 236–244; Zollman, "Shopping For a Future,"112–161.

[46]The range of influence of this guidebook extended beyond the Conservative movement. The fact that the book required seven additional printings attests to its widespread success. In addition, note that the phrase "Jewish Home Beautiful" appears frequently in both Reform and Orthodox sisterhood literature from the early 1940s through the 1960s. Book sales, pageant performances, and holiday workshops dedicated to home ceremonials had cross-denominational appeal. See, for example, "Report of the National Committee on Jewish Ceremonials and Art,"

NFTS Executive Committee Meeting, 15 January 1942. MS-73/1, AJA; "Jewish Ceremonials Dramatized," *Topics and Trends* (January–February, 1946): 2. MS-73, AJA; "Chanukah Holiday Publication," photocopy of flyer, Women's Branch of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations Papers, American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS), New York, New York.

[47]Betty D. Greenberg and Althea O. Silverman, *The Jewish Home Beautiful*, 7th ed. (New York: Women's League of the United Synagogue of America, 1953), 14.

[48]Unfortunately, we cannot know exactly how many women bought the book, as the Women's League did not keep records of orders or sales for *The Jewish Home Beautiful*.

[49]For a historical review of the American Jewish Hanukkah observance, see Jenna Weissman Joselit, "Merry Chanukah: The Changing Holiday Practices of American Jews, 1880–1950," in *The Uses of Tradition: Jewish Continuity in the Modern Era*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1992), 303–325.

[50]For example, "Shop open daily through Hanukkah" reads the bulletin for Temple Emanu-El of San Francisco, *The Temple Chronicle of Temple Emanu-El* XXXV, n. 5 (December, 1954), Temple Emanu-El Papers, Temple Emanu El, San Francisco, California; Temple Israel in New Rochelle, New York, reminded congregants that there were only twenty shopping days until Hanukkah in "20 More Days," *Temple Topics* XXVI, n. 2 (November 12, 1953), Center for Jewish Periodicals, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio.

[51]"Are You a Smart Shopper?" *VJCC Bulletin* 14, n.16 (20 December 1957), Adat Ari El Papers, Congregation Adat Ari El, North Hollywood, California.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Rom, 16.

[54]The Bezalel Academy, and its accompanying museum, founded in 1906 by Boris Shatz, was created as a center for Zionist art. Accepting the premise that art was a basic attribute of modern peoples, Shatz and his students collected botanical, zoological, and archeological objects indigenous to Palestine, as well as crafts from the Diaspora, in an effort to model a new Zionist aesthetic.

[55]See Beth Wenger and Jeffrey Shandler, "The Site of Paradise: The Holy Land in Jewish Imagination," in *Encounters With the Holy Land: Place, Past and Future in American Jewish Culture*, ed. Wenger and Shandler (Hanover, New Hampshire: Brandeis University Press, 1997), 26.

[56]Ibid., 26.

[57]Linda Mack Schloff, *And Prairie Dogs Weren't Kosher: Jewish Women in the Upper Midwest Since 1855* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1996), 170.

[58]Mrs. J. Walter Freiberg to NFTS Affiliate Presidents, 14 February 1927, 73/26/Series E, Circular Files, AJA.

[59]Ibid.

[60]Freiberg to Sisterhood Delegates and Presidents, 31 January 1927, 73/26/Series E, Circular Files, AJA.

[61]Mrs. Max Fink, "What Articles Do You Sell in Your Sisterhood Shop?" *Women's League Outlook* 23 n. 3 (March, 1953): 11.

[62]Ibid., 11.

[63]Alfred Werner, "What is Good Jewish Art?" *American Judaism* 4 (Passover, 1956): 8.

[64]Ibid., 8.

[65]Ibid., 9.

[66]*Guide for the Judaica Shop Committee*, 4.

[67]Shonie B. Levi and Sylvia R. Kaplan, *Across the Threshold: A Guide for the Jewish Homemaker,* 2nd ed. (New York: Schocken, 1965), 7–8.

[68]Meissen and Minton are both types of fine European china.

[69]Sarah Kopelman, "President's Page," *Women's League Outlook* 19, n. 4 (1949): 3. While Kopelman's statement included the rhetoric of replacement, the idea of replacing objects of assimilation with Jewish objects was not characteristic of either the Reform or Conservative sisterhoods. In fact, the rhetoric of replacement was antithetical to the Jewish Home Beautiful movement, which, for example, consistently sought to hang a Haifa seascape *next to* a Maine seascape. Mrs. Max Fink, chair of the Women's League gift shop committee, summarized the pluralistic nature of Jewish American decorating as follows: "In many Jewish homes you will find beautiful artistic statuary, pictures, ceramics and silver of French, Dutch, Chinese and Greek origin, but will you find any item of Jewish tradition or origin? The child must know that these things are not only for museums and special occasions *but can be displayed anytime alongside other cultural objects*." Viva Meissin and Minton! indicated Fink, as long as a menorah or mezuzah received equal display time. See Mrs. Max Fink, "A New Year for the Gift Shop," *Women's League Outlook* 2, n.1 (September, 1953): 15.

[70]Full Text Transcript of the Biennial Assembly Meeting: Seventeenth Biennial Assembly, 1948: 214, MS-73/1, AJA.

[71]Ibid., 214.

[72]Ibid., 214.

[73]See, for example, gladiolus advertisement in *Women's League Outlook* 32, n. 3 (March, 1962): 26.

[74]Vogue of Israel advertisement. *American Judaism* XI, n. 1 (September, 1961): 48.

[75]Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1993), 135.

[76]See *Wilshire Boulevard Temple Bulletin* 49, n. 12 (5 November 1962), Adat Ari El Papers, Congregation Adat Ari El, North Hollywood, California; *The Temple Chronicle of Temple Emanu-El* 29, n. 7 (April, 1951), Temple Emanu-El Papers, Temple Emanu-El, San Francisco, California; *Adath Israel Sisterhood Yearbook* 53 (1966–7), Klau Library Collection, Cincinnati, Ohio.



Schechter family in 1965—Danny, Chana, Haifa, Yitz, Yael, and Riva.
(Courtesy of Maxine S. Seller)

ARTICLE

Americans Who Became Israelis: Early *Olim* (1948–1963) Look Back

Maxine S. Seller

There is extensive scholarly literature about Jewish immigration to the United States; however much less has been written about Jewish emigration from the United States. This is a study of the latter. More specifically, it is an oral history study of American Jews who immigrated to Israel as young adults during the first fifteen years of the Jewish state's existence and who (unlike many of their peers) stayed to build families and careers and become Israelis.[1] The number of American *olim* (immigrants) during these early years was small relative to Israel's rapidly expanding European, Asian, and North African immigrant population (less than 0.4 of 1 percent in 1950) and smaller still relative to the total Jewish community in the United States (less than 0.2 of 1 percent in the mid-1960s.)[2] Nevertheless, this admittedly atypical group is of interest for two reasons. First, as an educational and occupational elite, they had an impact on Israel in its formative years much greater than their number would suggest.[3] Second, understanding early American *olim* adds to our understanding of American Jewry, American Zionism, and the relationship between the American Jewish community and the state of Israel.

In the years immediately following World War II, young American Jews had every reason to be optimistic about their future in the United States. The traumas of the Depression and the war were behind them. Anti-Semitism was far from dead, but progress was being made against housing restrictions and educational quotas. Young Jews were attending universities in unprecedented numbers and joining their non-Jewish counterparts in the move to the rapidly expanding suburbs. Yet a small number of young American Jews swam against the tide. This small number chose to exchange a comfortable, secure, and promising life in postwar America for the privations, uncertainties, and dangers of the new Jewish state. To understand what motivated them to do so and what their experiences have been like, I interviewed twenty-five Israelis who grew up in the United States and immigrated to Israel between 1948 and 1963. Unlike many, perhaps most, American *olim*, who eventually returned to the United States, my interviewees still lived in Israel at the time of the interviews, in 2002 and 2004.

My study begins with the interviewees' childhoods and their immigration to Israel as young adults and then follows them through the half-century or more of their lives in the Jewish state. I have limited the study to *olim* who came before the mid-1960s because I wanted to exclude as factors the social turmoil

of the mid- and late 1960s and the drama and aftermath of the 1967 Six Day War. More important, I wanted to interview people who had come early enough to participate in most—or in some cases all—of the country's history and who had therefore experienced the many social, political, and demographic changes that marked that history. Although the interviews covered many subjects, this paper will focus on three questions: Why did these twenty-four interviewees immigrate to Israel? Over the years, what ties have they had, and do they still have, with the United States? Knowing what they know now about the problems Israel would face and the many ways the country would change, would they immigrate again?

Most of the research about twentieth century American *olim* concentrates on immigrants who arrived after 1967 rather than earlier, probably because immigrants after that time were more numerous and reliable statistical information is more readily available.[4] Most of this work is sociological, and much of it is quantitative, relying on survey data or on surveys supplemented by interviews. The first comprehensive empirical study was conducted in 1967 by Aaron Antonovsky and David Katz for the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research. In this impressive study, 1,649 former Americans and Canadians were given a structured ("closed") interview of eighty-five questions about their backgrounds and their adjustment to life in Israel. A few years later, the Israel Central Bureau of Immigrant Absorption tracked a random sample of immigrants, including 167 Americans, who arrived between September 1969 and August 1970 for a period of three years. This was the first of a series of such studies.[5]

Major themes in these and most other studies of American *olim* include the numbers of immigrants and the difficulty of ascertaining those numbers, their characteristics (age, sex, marital status, education, religious affiliation), their motivation for immigration, and their adjustment to Israel. Gerald Engel compared those who stayed with those who returned to the United States.[6] Others made comparisons between American *olim* and *olim* from other countries or between American *olim* and the American Jewish population as a whole or the Israeli population as a whole. Calvin Goldscheider addressed all of these themes in an article rich in quantitative data.[7] Other scholars have investigated more specialized topics, such as the role of religion in immigration, American *olim*'s interaction with Israeli bureaucracy, and issues of language.[8] Kevin Avruch went beyond empirical data to develop a new theory about the "traditionalizing" of American *olim* as they adjusted to Israeli culture and their simultaneous struggle as westerners to "modernize," or prevent "Levantinization," of the new state.[9]

While I share other scholars' interest in the background, motivation, and absorption of American *olim*, the research from which this article is taken is different from earlier work. It is historical rather than sociological, qualitative rather than quantitative, personal rather than impersonal. I have not compared the twenty-five people I interviewed to any other group in the United States

or Israel, nor have I constructed a new theory based on this small population. Rather, I have tried to understand the life stories of twenty-five individuals on their own terms. I wanted to know how the interviewees remembered and interpreted their own experience. While other researchers examined motivation, adjustment, and identity issues at one point in time or over a limited number of years, I looked at these topics within the larger and richer context of nearly the entire span of the interviewees' lives. Unlike researchers who worked within narrower time frames, I was able to ask how it all turned out—how former Americans defined their identities after half of a century in Israel and how they feel now, as mature men and women with children, grandchildren, even great-grandchildren, about the decisions they made when they were young.

Methodology

In 2002 and 2004 I interviewed twenty-five former Americans—fourteen women and eleven men, including six married couples and one pair of brothers—living in Haifa, Tel Aviv, Tivon, Safed, and Jerusalem. Interviewees were volunteers identified through the newsletter of the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel, contacts at the Moriya Synagogue in Haifa, and referrals by friends, colleagues, and other interviewees. I conducted the interviews in the subjects' homes, meeting with husbands and wives separately to preserve the independence of each interview and to allow for the emergence of gender differences. Each interview lasted two to four hours. The interviews were taped and transcribed, and the transcriptions were sent to the interviewees for editing. Many participants supplemented their interviews with family photographs, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, letters, poetry, and in one case an unpublished autobiography. Some provided additional information through telephone calls, letters, e-mails, and second interviews.

I conducted the interviews as what oral historian Ronald Grele called "conversational narratives" rather than as formal question-and-answer sessions. I asked open-ended questions such as "Tell me about your family" or "What were your first impressions of Israel?" or "How has Israel changed during the time you have lived here—for better and for worse?" and followed up on new topics that the interviewees introduced.[10] Rather than adopting a stance of complete detachment, I shared information about my academic and personal background and my connections to Israel—the first of my many visits was in the summer of 1949—when asked or when it seemed appropriate to do so.

Interviewees were generous with their time, their memories, and their reflections. I was impressed by their openness and by the frankness and thoughtfulness with which they addressed all topics. I am aware that memories can fade with time and that what an individual remembers can be influenced by other people's accounts, or by subsequent events, or by the subject's desire to present himself or herself in a particular way. However, their powers of recall seemed

excellent, and they were conscientious in focusing not only on the events of the past but also on how they felt about those events at the time and how they feel about them now. They gave me permission to use their complete names (see endnotes), but in the text I will use first names only.

The Interviewees

While not a statistically representative sample of the American Jewish community, the interviewees were representative of many parts of it. Like the majority of American Jews in the 1940s and 1950s, most of the participants were from urban backgrounds, including New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, Milwaukee, and Atlanta. However, several had spent part or all of their childhoods in small towns in the South and the Midwest. One grew up on an Indian reservation in South Dakota, where she rode a horse every day to a one-room school. The interviewees' religious backgrounds varied from secular to Orthodox, and their Jewish educations ranged over a similarly wide spectrum—from virtually none at all to attendance at Jewish day schools and higher education at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS). While a disproportionate number, about one-fourth, attended at least a few years of Jewish day school, most went to public schools; their Jewish education was relegated to Sunday schools and, perhaps, weekday afternoon Hebrew schools. A few came from families with strong Zionist backgrounds— "Dick was born with a blue and white flag in his mouth," his wife told me—but most did not.[11]

Everyone had immigrated to Israel from the United Stated, but, interestingly, five had spent at least a few of their childhood years elsewhere. The children of World War II refugees, Annette (born in Belgium) and Hadassah (born in Cuba) had spent the war years in Cuba and immigrated to the United States in 1946. Joseph Morganstern escaped Poland with his family and arrived in New York by way of Russia in 1941. Genah was born in Palestine and D'vora immigrated to Palestine at the age of two; both returned to the United States when the war broke out. With only a few exceptions the rest were second-generation Americans with at least one and often two foreign-born parents. Although they shared many stories about parents (or grandparents) from Europe, they did not seem to see their *aliyah* (immigration to Israel) as continuing a family tradition of immigration. Only Marcia specifically mentioned (in an unpublished memoir, not in her interview) an immigrant parent as a role model—her mother, who had faced many hardships in coming to Canada and then to the United States as a young teenager: "Perhaps I somehow wished to imitate in some way the challenges she had to surmount," Marcia wrote.[12]

Many interviewees described comfortable, middle-class backgrounds. Among the more unusual middle-class occupations: Nechama's mother was a drama teacher and producer, Dick's father was a career naval officer, and Naomi told me proudly that her father was the first American-born Orthodox

rabbi in the United States. Among the less affluent, Yitz's father worked for an uncle's wallpaper business, later became a neighborhood grocer, and eventually bought a chicken farm. David's mother boarded young Jews from small towns (mostly girls) whose parents sent them to Atlanta to meet suitable Jewish marriage partners. No one spoke of actual deprivation—there had always been food, shelter, and clothing—but several spoke of their parents not having much money, especially during the Great Depression. David took a commercial course in public high school because there was no money for college: "We were poor, not dirt poor, not scrabbling poor. But money was very important and we all had to work. I did all kinds of work. I sold magazine subscriptions, I delivered newspapers, I sold white linen caps on the street."[13] The young men of appropriate age served in the military during World War II, as did one of the women, Edythe, much to her parents' dismay.

At the time of the interviews, the participants reflected the diversity of their adopted country. They included the religious (though none was ultra-Orthodox), the secular, entrepreneurs and socialists, right-wing supporters of a "greater Israel," and Peace Now leftists. Many of the men had served in the military. Two of the women, Genah and Haifa (a nickname), were pacifists. More than one-third had lived on kibbutzim although, reflecting the decline of the kibbutz movement, only one was still there at the time of the interview. While all came from Ashkenazi families, many had children or grandchildren married to Israelis of Moroccan, Yemenite, or other Sephardic backgrounds.

The interviewees' activities in Israel were compatible with the idea that American *olim* had an impact disproportionate to their numbers. "Overachievers," most were retired from one, two, or even three jobs or careers pursued simultaneously or consecutively. They had been—and in some cases still were—students, professors, teachers, librarians, secretaries, business people, investment counselors, engineers, psychologists, social workers, journalists, professional fundraisers, administrators of various kinds, homemakers, and volunteers for a wide range of causes. Murray was a publisher and an art dealer; Hadassah headed the department of Document Supply and Inter-Library Loan at the central library of the Technion and instructed women converting to Judaism; Joseph recruited investment capital for Israeli industry; and Susan was a poet and a founding member of the Haifa Committee for Soviet Jewry.

Immigration as a Process

Virtually none of the interviewees could pinpoint a specific time when they made the decision to live in Israel. Rather, they described *aliyah* as a process, a deepening awareness of and attachment to the Jewish state as an idea and a reality that took place over a period of years and, according to several respondents, could have been reversed at various points along the way. In a few cases the process began in early childhood. Nechama, for example, remembered her

passion for Israel, then Palestine, as beginning with her first Hebrew school experiences: "I loved everything Jewish, and I loved everything connected with the Hebrew language and with Palestine and everything," she told me.[14] Interestingly, Nechama was the only interviewee to mention formal Jewish education as a motivating factor.

Attachment to Israel also began early for Annette, the Belgian-born child of refugee parents, but for her, as for many others, the Zionist message came through informal education, camps, and youth groups rather than religious schools. Zionist clubs and camps expanded greatly in the interwar years, attracting middle-class, American-born youth with cultural programs, conversational Hebrew, folk songs and dances, and charismatic leaders.[15] Almost half of the interviewees reported experiences with these camps and clubs; indeed, they were among the closest to a common influence. Surprisingly, most of the young people who attended these camps and clubs did not come from strong Zionist families, and in many cases their attendance was accidental. For example, Annette's parents, newcomers to the United States, sent her to a Hebrew-speaking camp because friends told them that Manhattan was no place for a child in the summer and recommended this particular camp. Annette attended for ten summers. She recalled that

> It was sponsored by something called the Hebrew Education Committee … in New York. They tried to get you to speak Hebrew … It was … modeled very much after Israel … and it looked like a kibbutz. I mean, afterwards, when I went for the first time to a kibbutz, I felt at home … The streets and the bunks and so on were named after cities and towns in Israel. So all the names were familiar to me by the time I came here. You learned *all* the songs.… I think I know more of those songs from the forties and fifties than most Israelis do … The counselors, the dancing and singing and so on, all came from Israel … And it was very, very intensive and I loved it.… I think that was one of the most, one of the strongest things in my background in terms of influencing me and where I went.[17]

For nearly half, the process began in late grade school or early adolescence with participation in Zionist youth groups—Young Judea for general Zionists, Bnei Akiva for religious Zionists, Shomer Hatzair for socialist Zionists. David, who became a national officer in Young Judea, joined the Atlanta chapter at the age of twelve because it was the center of Jewish social life for young people in Atlanta; he did not learn until he was already an enthusiastic member that Young Judea was a Zionist organization. David and other interviewees told of spending many hours after school and on weekends in these groups, which became the focus of their social life. Unlike most of the children who joined these groups, interviewees carried their participation into young adulthood, becoming group leaders, assuming organizational and administrative

responsibilities, and attending training farms and other special programs that prepared them for *aliyah*. Several met their spouses through youth group activities. Thus, while the general American Jewish population, including those who identified themselves as Zionists, were not preparing for actual immigration to Israel, these interviewees were part of a small, intensely committed peer group that was. A distinctive mindset and clarity of purpose set them apart from the great majority of American Zionists of all ages who stayed at home: "If we believed in it, then we had to do it. That's it," Marcia explained.[18]

"We never openly said, 'We're going to Palestine. We're going to live there,'" Carl told me. "It was understood. It was only a matter of time."[19] Making the decision that the time was right to move to Israel did not end the immigration process. Some participants, including Carl and his wife Nechama, spent months, even years, in further preparation: looking for jobs and housing in the new country, making elaborate lists of what to bring, transporting their children long distances to yeshivot to introduce them to Hebrew and, in some cases, trying to placate parents (even those who were Zionists) and siblings who doubted their sanity.

Finally, interviewees described immigration as a process rather than an event. Many spent time in Israel, or Mandate Palestine, and returned to the United States once and sometimes more than once before making a commitment to remain permanently. Some went as part of summer programs sponsored by their youth groups or by the Student Zionist Organization on their college campuses. Some traveled on their own as students (several under the G.I. Bill), and a few came to do specific, time-bound jobs for the Israeli government or private industry. Joseph's parents gave him a trip as a graduation present, and Laurie and John came as tourists on their honeymoon.

Why *Aliyah*?

Scholars of immigration speak of "voluntary" and "involuntary" immigration. Clearly, the subjects of this study were voluntary immigrants; they did not have to leave the United States. Scholars also speak of the "push" factors, usually poverty or oppression, that motivate people to leave their homelands and "pull" factors, usually economic and educational opportunities, that attract immigrants to another country. More recently scholars also speak of "chain" migration, people who migrate to a new country because relatives or close friends are already there. In these participants' narratives, pull factors, the attractions of Israel, were most prominent while push factors, although secondary, also existed in many cases. Chain migration was minor, though not altogether absent. Outside of these very general forces, I have identified, for the purpose of analysis, seven distinct categories of interviewees, based upon their motivation for making *aliyah*: the legacies, the socialists, the religiously motivated, the recruits, the family preservers, the rescuers, and the "accidental tourists."

These admittedly simplistic categories were not mutually exclusive—many interviewees fit in two or more of these groupings, either simultaneously or at different times in the immigration process.

Legacies. The first category, the people I call legacies, had such strong Zionist backgrounds and family ties to Israel that they seemed on a trajectory toward *aliyah* almost from birth. One such legacy was Shirley, who grew up in Chicago. Shirley's father was a rabbi, her family spoke Hebrew at home—very unusual at the time—and one of her brothers was a founder of Bnei Akiva, a religious Zionist organization in America. Many of Shirley's relatives had moved from Europe to Mandate Palestine in the 1930s and, in the case of one uncle, as early as 1914, and her family remained in close contact with them: "We're Zionists and very strong. That's what we wanted very much.… Our whole life was … influenced by the relatives in Israel, in Palestine," Shirley told me. After training to be a psychiatric social worker, Shirley immigrated to Israel in 1949: "My uncle, the one who arrived in 1914, was one of the founders of the city of Ramat Gan … and I have a brother who served in the 1948 army … I came straight to them," she told me.[20]

Shirley was clearly pulled to Israel by her Zionist ideology. However, because of her strong desire to join family members already in Israel, she could be considered not only as a legacy but also as an example of chain migration. Chain migration also played a role in the lives of several other interviewees, where they influenced a sibling, or were influenced by a sibling, toward *aliyah*. In at least one family, parents followed their children and grandchildren to Israel.

Socialists. A second category were the socialists, people attracted to Israel primarily by what they saw as the opportunity to build a secular social and economic utopia—an egalitarian society—in the new Jewish state. Haifa came for this reason: "In the early days my socialist side was much stronger than my Zionist side," she told me. Like many of the interviewees, Haifa came to Israel by way of a Zionist youth group, the socialist Shomer Hatzair, which she and her sister had originally joined for social rather than ideological reasons. "Our girlfriends were part of the group," she remembered. She stayed because of the camaraderie, the quality of the leaders, and the stimulating intellectual and cultural content:

> We had a lot of discussions, which I enjoyed very much. About Zionism. About the political situation in the country … We had wonderful people working with us who were a little older than us.… We were thirteen, so they may have been sixteen, seventeen.… There was a couple from Israel.… In school you had reading and writing and arithmetic. But here we were educated through music and dance and theatre.… So it was a broadening of our intellectual and social world.

Coming from a working-class family, Haifa was attracted to the group's socialist ideals; indeed, socialism was more important than Zionism for Haifa not only as a young woman but probably throughout her life. After a very positive experience at a Shomer Hatzair training farm in New Jersey, where she immediately took to the collective lifestyle, Haifa immigrated with her husband Yitz, also from Shomer Hatzair, to Kibbutz Sasa in the Galilee.[21]

Religiously Motivated. Religion motivated more interviewees than socialism, including another married couple, Hadassah and Moshe. Hadassah and Moshe were an observant couple to whom traditional Judaism was very important, both in their decision to move to Israel and throughout their lives They met in Bnei Akiva, a religious Zionist youth group, attracted to each other at least in part by their common goal of *aliyah.* Marriage to someone who shared this goal was especially important to Hadassah because while Moshe could, and did, travel to Israel alone as a student, Hadassah, as a religious girl, could not. (Even for nonreligious girls in the conventional 1950s independent travel could be problematic.) Hadassah was one of several respondents who made a decision not to date, much less marry, a man who did not share her desire to live in Israel.

Both Hadassah and Moshe believed that a religious Jew should take seriously the *mitzvah* to live in the Holy Land if possible, and both saw *aliyah* as "an opportunity to take part in where Judaism is really leading to." They remembered believing when they immigrated, and at the time of the interview they believed even more firmly, that "this is where Judaism is taking place, it's developing, here in this country, and not what's going on in the United States or Australia or any place else." As young parents, they believed in the importance of bringing up Jewish children in a religious and cultural environment, a country of hanukkiahs, not Christmas trees. The Jewish state was their answer to religious assimilation: "Because this is ours and there, you know, out of Israel, is not ours," Moshe explained.[22]

Recruit and Family Preserver. Dick was a "recruit," persuaded to come to Israel by representatives of the Israeli government. A naval officer in World War II, Dick survived a kamikaze attack in Okinawa that gutted his ship. Believing that "God let me live not just for me anymore. I have to do something beyond this," he became an active Zionist after the war, a member of the *Haganah* underground in the United States.[23] Zionism was not new to him, but his postwar level of activity was. While he was working with the *Haganah* raising money for illegal weapons and interviewing prospective pilots, Dick was asked by Teddy Kollek, later mayor of Jerusalem, to come to the fledgling state for a year to help build its navy. Dick described his conversation with Kollek:

> I said, "Come on, now. I was a junior officer.… There were thousands of guys like me." He said, "Well, let me ask you a question. If we take all the people in the navy, all the officers, and of them take the number who were communications, electronic warfare specialists like you were, is that a small number?" "Yeah, that's a small number." "Take the number who had the amount of combat experience that you had. Is that still a small number? Take the number of those who were Jews, and of the number that were Jews, take the number that were Zionists, and of the number who were Zionists, take the number who speak Hebrew"—because I know Hebrew fairly well … "And of those who speak Hebrew, how many will go if we ask them? It's you! We know you're not the greatest guy for this. We have no one else." So I said okay.[24]

Dick agreed to go not only because he succumbed to Kollek's persuasiveness but also because of his belief that God had saved his life for a purpose. Dick was a recruit, but his motivation was also religious.

Susan, Dick's wife, went to Israel with him. Her family was vehemently opposed to her going. In fact, her father was a founding member of the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism. Susan, who described herself as "religiously deprived," knew little about Judaism or Zionism. "I didn't even know where Israel was," she told me. "I had *no* feeling of connection." Pregnant (although she did not know it yet) and already the mother of two little girls when she and Dick moved, Susan was motivated by what she perceived as a need to preserve the quality of her marriage. She went to Israel because she loved her husband and knew how important this was to him. She remembered thinking at the time, "It's something he wants to do, and it may come between us if I don't go."[25]

Susan and Dick were excellent examples of immigrants who experienced *aliyah* as a process rather than a single event. Dick had been recruited for an assignment of only one year, but in fact the couple stayed for seven years before returning to the United States. Each gave a different reason for the return. Susan, who, interestingly, had been the more reluctant of the two to leave Israel, told me she returned to the United States to be with her family because her father was very ill. Dick attributed the decision to the demands of his business career: "We felt we'd never come back [to Israel]. We'd done our bit for the homeland," he told me. Yet they did come back, eleven years later, this time to stay. Susan's second and permanent *aliyah*, unlike her first, was the culmination of her own ideological and religious journey. Back in the United States, she had maintained her ties to Israel through her Israeli friends and through activism in Hadassah, but most importantly, through her deepening ties to traditional Judaism. She spoke of her feelings while attending synagogue in the United States: "The words are there, the longing for Jerusalem, the Promised Land, all that.… [H]ow could I be saying those words if I didn't mean them?… *That's*

when I became a Zionist, not while I lived here [in Israel]." No longer a "family preserver," Susan immigrated as a religious Zionist by the time she and Dick returned to Israel.[26]

Rescuers. While the Holocaust hovered in the background of virtually every interviewee's decision to immigrate—especially those who came of age in the late 1940s and early 1950s—it was in the foreground for this group of participants. The rescuers' immediate concern was the welfare of the homeless Jewish refugees from Europe.

Murray was a rescuer. His relationship with Israel grew out of his love for the Jewish people and, more specifically, out of concern for the Holocaust survivors. While Murray described his home as "very, very Jewish," he did not remember speaking of Zionism while growing up. He did remember that "the Jews of Europe were very much a topic" and that his mother had struggled in vain to save her family members by bringing them to the United States. Instead of going to college after World War II, Murray acted on his conviction that Jews languishing in displaced person camps in Europe needed a home and that, since neither Europe nor the United States wanted them, they had to go to Palestine.

A U.S. Merchant Marine during World War II, Murray joined a group of volunteers working with the *Haganah*. They picked up an old ship, a former icebreaker called *Tradewinds*, in Miami, refitted it in Lisbon, and filled it with Jewish refugees who came on board in rubber rafts under cover of darkness in secluded spots on the Italian Riviera. Murray learned about Zionism from the refugees and their *Haganah* escorts on the ship: "You learn fast," he told me. The ship, by now renamed *Hatikvah* (*The Hope*), was intercepted by a British destroyer, and Murray was imprisoned first in Cyprus and then in Athlit (a British camp near Haifa) before finally being released.[27] The fact that his activity was illegal did not bother him: "It was a just cause and the Jews, survivors of the Holocaust, were coming to a home," he said. Back in the United States, he found himself on the Jewish lecture circuit: "Marvelous! I was a hero," he said.[28] But the Jewish homeland was on his mind, and so the rescuer, now a Zionist, returned to Israel as an immigrant in 1949.

"Accidental Tourists." Finally, there were two interviewees I call the "accidental tourists," John and Laurie, who became Israelis almost by chance. Neither was the product of a Zionist upbringing, youth group, or camp, and neither was a recruit or a rescuer. John had had no religious education, no bar mitzvah, virtually no contact with Judaism at all until, influenced by a friend from college, he read Leon Uris's bestseller *Exodus* and Abraham Sachar's *A History of the Jews in the Modern World*. Already in Europe on their honeymoon, John

and Laurie went to Israel as tourists in 1959 because John thought it would be interesting to see the country.

"I hated it from the minute I saw it, " Laurie remembered. "It was so primitive. The food was awful. The accommodations were awful.… It was always hot and dusty and full of flies." Although she was moved in Jerusalem "by the thread of [Jewish] history going through the years," her main impression was that Israel was "just a lot of rocks."[29] John's reaction could not have been more different: "I liked the country very much the week that we traveled around in 1959. It's exciting," he remembered. The couple returned to Israel in 1962 for John to take a two-year job contract and then stayed permanently because he found living there an adventure and a challenge:

> Had I been raised in the States in the 1800s I would have gone West. I wanted to do something exciting. I mean, I got interested in Zionism, of course, but I wanted to do something different before I settled down, to do something off the beaten path.… And that was basically the initial motivation. Little by little, you know, I ended up staying.[30]

Laurie, who had accompanied John reluctantly for what she originally thought would be only two years, wanted to go home. She stayed, however, for the same reason Susan decided to accompany Dick on his naval assignment: she wanted to preserve her family. Divorce seemed her only alternative. As the conditions of her life there improved over the years, Laurie, too, came to feel that Israel was home.

Ethnic and Personal Goals

Some motivations were widely shared among this study's participants, cutting across the seven categories. One of these was ethnic motivation—identification with and love of the Jewish people. Regardless of their religious or political ideology and whether or not they were active "rescuers," many interviewees spoke of the impact of the Holocaust and, consequently, of their desire to help build a safe refuge for Jews, a place where Jews could control their own destiny. This road to Zionism seemed especially common among the older *olim,* those who would have been most aware of the Holocaust when it was happening or soon after. Many of the younger interviewees simply had such a strong love for and identification with the Jewish people that it led them toward the Jewish homeland.

Personal motivations, too, were widely shared and for some, equally powerful. Several interviewees came to Israel not in spite of the difficulties of living there, but because of them. As young adults leaving the parental home, they were drawn to *aliyah* as a challenge, a road to adulthood. This was especially true for several of the women, who saw Israel as providing space for personal growth away from the restrictive class and gender expectations they had grown

up with. Another, even more widespread personal motivation was that people wanted to do something important with their lives, something that would make their lives count. Many interviewees, women and men, told me they saw the United States as large and already developed, but Israel was small and young. They believed that in Israel their contributions—indeed, their lives—would make a difference.

The "Push" Factor

Although all of the interviewees emphasized the attraction of Israel, the "pull" of the new country, a few also spoke about "push" factors, personal and social conditions in the United States that contributed to their decision to emigrate. Susan's interview suggested that many of these subjects (and perhaps subjects of other studies as well) may have underreported push factors. Susan told of sitting with "Anglo Saxon" (English-speaking) friends in Israel: "We were all talking about why we had come.… [I]t was the idealism, but there was also some sort of dissatisfaction with the way things were where we were from. For instance, my father and Dick." For Susan and Dick, and perhaps for others as well, family issues were a push factor. Susan's father and Dick did not get along, and Dick hated working in his father-in-law's real estate business: "And then he was asked to come as an advisor to the Israeli Navy. It was an out in a way. In addition to being an ideal.… So it's running to [Israel], but it was also a bit of running away," she explained. Going to Israel was "a bit of running away " for Susan as well:

> My mother used to call me up when I was a young married woman in Philadelphia and tell me what to do.… And then Dick would say, 'That's ridiculous,' not to do that. I didn't know who to obey, my mother or my husband. And when I got there [to Israel] I thought, 'Hey, I don't have to obey anybody.'[31]

Class hierarchies helped push socialist Haifa out of the United States and toward Shomer Hatzair's promise of an egalitarian Jewish homeland:

> I felt quite strongly about equality for all because in our family we were the lower rung of the financial, economic level of the ladder and I felt it very much.… I had a wonderful dad who worked so hard. Why was he not as good as the other people, even though we didn't have money and he couldn't make it? I didn't see the correctness in that. So this was for me a perfect fitting.

Shomer Hatzair held out the ideal of gender equality as well as social class equality, and this too resonated with Haifa's experience, suggesting yet another push factor: "My brothers never had to do anything, and the girls (that's my sister and I) would help in the house. That was the place of the woman, right? But the boys didn't have to, and that irked me very much."[32]



Murray Greenfield and fellow crew members from the ship Hatikvah *that smuggled illegal Jewish immigrants into Palestine. Here he is in Cyprus, where he was imprisoned after the British captured the ship in 1947.*





Left to right:

David and Frieda Macarov with Varda, the first child born in the Israel Airforce camp, "Ariel," in Jaffe, 1947.

David Macarov as a student at the Hebrew University in 1948.



David Macarov on guard duty for the Haganah *in Jerusalem, 1948.*

(All photos courtesy Maxine S. Seller)



Yitz Schechter at a Shomer Hatzair training farm in Hightstown, NJ, 1946.



Yitz and Haifa Schechter with Yael, September 1949. Born in July, Yael was the first baby born in Sasa.



Yitz and Haifa build a snowman in Sasa, 1950.



Yitz, Danny, Haifa, Riva, and Yael in Sasa, 1958–1959.



Edith Geiger, founder of the English language library at Safed, at work. Photo undated.

Disillusionment with the dishonesty he encountered as he entered the American business world helped push David toward the new Jewish homeland, which he saw at the time of his *aliyah* as more idealistic and less focused on material gain than the United States:

> I've had experiences in American business that disgusted me. I worked for a chain of shoe stores when I was out of high school and the office manager became ill and I took his place.… And in the course of my taking the place of the sick office manager, I learned that this company was stealing right and left in its income tax.… As I became bookkeeper, I began to realize that the money from sales and the money deposited were different. This was called creaming. They would cream the money off and divide it among family members. And then they would give me lectures on how one has to keep one's nose to the grindstone and not waste time in Young Judea.… And that happened on three different jobs, different ways.[33]

Interestingly, very few of the interviewees mentioned alienation or anti-Semitism as push factors. Hadassah was virtually the only one who spoke of alienation from the United States: "I never really felt that I was an American. I felt my Jewishness more than I felt my Americanism," she told me. Hadassah attributed her sense of alienation to the fact that her parents were refugees (although other children of refugees did not feel this way or did not say so if they did), that she was born in Cuba, and that she had a very strong religious upbringing and education. Anti-Semitism was another push factor for her: "I had a piano teacher who lived in a closed-off section with a guard with a sign that said, 'No dogs and no Jews,'" she told me. "I had to pass the guard every time I went for a lesson, and he was very nasty."[34] Given the years in which they lived in the United States and the fact that most grew up in immigrant households, I found it surprising that personal experiences with alienation and anti-Semitism were not mentioned more often. Perhaps time had softened unpleasant memories. Or perhaps for interviewees brought up in the shadow of the Holocaust and living for decades with terrorism in Israel, the social and economic anti-Semitism of post-World War II America did not seem very significant. Also, many interviewees grew up in close-knit, mostly Jewish communities, where they would have been insulated from some aspects of anti-Semitism.

Ties to the United States

Unlike refugees from poverty or oppression, these "voluntary" immigrants spoke very positively of the United States and over the years maintained many personal and cultural ties to the country in which they had grown up. Almost everyone kept his or her American passport (which I was told made travel to other countries as well as the United States easier). More important, almost everyone maintained close contact by mail, e-mail, telephone, and personal visits with family, friends, and colleagues in the United States, including, in

many cases, children and grandchildren living there temporarily or permanently. John and Laurie spent every summer and every sabbatical in the United States (an arrangement that had helped reconcile her to remaining in Israel). Other academics, too, made frequent trips there for conferences and sabbaticals (aided by Israeli universities' generous travel allowances) or to pursue graduate or professional training. Several traveled regularly to the United States as fundraisers or public relations officers for Israeli institutions. Carl and his wife Nechama traveled to the United States often and kept in touch with many people there because Carl wrote a widely syndicated column in American Jewish newspapers about life in Israel.

Although everyone spoke serviceable Hebrew, English remained important in many of the interviewees' lives and helped link them and their children to the United States. Participants told me that they made sure their Israeli-born children knew English for two reasons—because it would enable them to communicate with family in the United States and because it was widely used in business and educational circles in Israel and throughout the world. Edythe created and maintained an impressive English-language library in Safed that fostered knowledge of English for individuals and schools throughout the Galilee; and at the time of the interviews, Ben Zion ("Butch") was teaching his grandchildren English.

Although fluent enough to meet the needs of daily life, a few were never totally comfortable in Hebrew, especially if they spent a lot of time outside of Israel or used English regularly in their work. After many decades in Israel, Butch was finally secure enough in his Israeli identity to relax with the English-language daily *The Jerusalem Post*. Susan, who had spent eleven years in the United States between her first and her second immigration and who wrote poetry in English, understood her Hebrew-speaking friends but answered them in English: "It's easier that way.… It's not just the language," she continued. "It's jokes. It's a [long pause] background that I don't have in common with them.… It doesn't trouble me.… I have enough friends, and I'm busy, and my life is in English."[35]

Many interviewees spoke of lifelong cultural, psychological, as well as linguistic connections to their American background. While they had friends among Israelis, both native and foreign-born, many interviewees felt a special affinity with other "Anglo-Saxons," the Israeli term for all English speakers, whether from the United States, Canada, England, South Africa, or elsewhere. For example, when Naomi was a student at the Hebrew University in 1949, she helped organize *ha-ḥug ha-Anglosaksi* (the Anglo-Saxon group.) Naomi remembered the young people in the group as more "western," the interaction between the boys and girls freer: "We didn't misbehave, but we weren't self-conscious in the same way," she explained. "Also, I think we were perhaps more intellectual.… But I think it was mainly sociological.… A lot of couples came

out of that group."[36] Many decades later, at the time of the interviews, some of these affinities apparently still survived. Haifa noted that "Anglo-Saxons really stick together" to maintain not only English but also their shared approach to culture and education: "They're different from, say, Israeli Israelis.… Here in Tivon I have a group of friends who are all Anglo-Saxon."[37]

Links to the United States were political and psychological as well. As mentioned earlier, virtually everyone kept his or her American passport. Although many assured me that this was a matter of convenience (for travel, rather than identity), several noted that the American citizenship represented by the passport set them apart. Unlike most other foreign-born Israelis, they had the option of returning to their former homes. Several also told me that American ideas helped shape their political views in Israel. When she first arrived, Naomi was appalled by the politicization of almost every aspect of Israeli life:

> To the eyes of an American, the almost complete politicization of everything from housing to jobs to education … was wrong.… To use government money in order to further political aims in such a blatant, straightforward way was something I found shocking.[38]

Several interviewees criticized the Israeli electoral system, where parties rather than localities were represented in the Knesset because of their knowledge of the very different, and to their mind better, American system. Similarly, several expressed discomfort with the close relationship between the rabbinate and the government in Israel, a discomfort they attributed, at least in part, to the separation of religion and state that they experienced in America. Haifa attributed her concern about the treatment of Israeli Arabs to her American origins. "I'm an American. It's different, it really is, the way we look at things."[39] American religious as well as political views were a continuing influence. Some interviewees from Conservative or Reform backgrounds were initially so uncomfortable with Israeli synagogues (all of which were Orthodox when they arrived) that they established their own synagogues with mixed seating and prayerbooks imported from the United States.

Finally, interviewees indicated another set of continuing American influences: impatience with bureaucracy and authority and an eagerness to innovate. In her first year at Kibbutz Sasa, Haifa, then a new mother, successfully challenged the authoritative European pediatrician over how babies should be fed; when the physician ordered cornstarch and water, she and other young Americans at Sasa insisted on milk. Haifa also initiated more time for parents to be with their children during the day, a practice that spread from the mainly American Sasa to other kibbutzim. Another example is Murray, who wrote a book to help prospective immigrants navigate the bureaucracy of the Jewish Agency and launched a number of economic projects, despite difficulties from the government:

> I raised money for mortgage funds, loan funds, all kinds of things like this and I always fought the government.… We [Americans] are too difficult.… You see, when you get poor people … you give them something and they're happy. And the people that are not poor, and they've got education, and they've got backgrounds, they want more. Or they want different. And these demands they [government officials] can't understand. 'What do you mean … you want to change this, you want to change that.' Americans always want to change everything. You know, we've got a background of democracy and freedom … and how to vote for people. We've got all these things and it's built into you, and you want to bring it with you here.… There's no question about it … Americans, just by being here, even when not doing anything, have a certain positive influence. And, of course, if they're active—[40]

Would They Do It Again?

While the interviewees expressed great pride in Israel's cultural and scientific achievements and in its population growth, especially the "ingathering" of Jews from Morocco, Ethiopia, Russia, and elsewhere, they felt as free as every other Israeli to criticize their adopted country. Some who had immigrated to live on kibbutzim regretted the decline of the collective ethos and the rise of capitalism with its emphasis on competition and individual gain. Some expressed concern that in recent years uncritical "Americanization" was changing Israeli life and culture for the worse, that politicians were corrupt and self-serving, and that young people were not as patriotic or idealistic as their generation had been—although a few, not taking themselves too seriously, attributed their concerns about the young to their own advancing age. Whether on the political right or left, almost everyone agreed that Israeli Arabs were not treated equally, and everyone agonized over the continuing violence with the Palestinians: "Sometimes I wonder if we did a good thing for our children, bringing them here; peace seems so far away. I say to myself, 'things will get better,' but who knows? Back then, who knew?" said Laurie.[41]

Despite their recognition of these and other problems in Israel, only one interviewee, Yitz, even suggested that he might be able to live elsewhere. Yitz told me sadly that he had come to Israel to build "a secure home" for the Jews, but that now the rise of radical Islam had made this problematic.[42] Despite continuing close and warm ties to the United States, participants at the time of the interviews identified themselves as Israelis—not expatriates, not Anglo-Saxon (despite their acknowledgement of continuing American influences), not any other kind of hyphenated Israeli. Carl, who had immigrated at an older age than most and who had spent a great deal of time in the United States as a representative of the Technion and later as a newspaper columnist, told me that he felt himself to be simultaneously an American and an Israeli. Carl's perception of double identity was exceptional, however; virtually all of the other interviewees saw

themselves as unambiguously Israeli: "I feel I'm Israeli. I mean I am Israeli.… I still love the United States, I think it's a wonderful place… a great country… but Israel is home," said John, expressing the view heard again and again. Several commented that American friends and relatives no longer understood them (or vice versa) and that they found life in America less interesting than life in Israel, people in America less interesting than people in Israel.

After so many years, the interviewees' ties to Israel were strong, and their roots in Israel were deep. Most had established close and large families, including children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren. They lived close enough to see them frequently—even secular families gathered for Friday night dinners—and were deeply involved in their activities. Also, having arrived early enough to "get in on the ground floor," many had enjoyed long and successful careers. "We live pretty well," said Dick, whose penthouse apartment provided a spectacular view of Haifa harbor. "Yeah, I know all the problems. But when I go back to the States, I'm aware of the problems there, too."[43]

At the time of most of the interviews (2002), the intifada was raging, suicide bombers were a constant menace, the economy was in serious recession, and the country was under diplomatic pressure from former friends as well as longtime enemies. Yet, despite the fact that their American passports could grant them permanent return to the United States, the interviewees chose to stay. Their narratives suggest that they remained due to a kind of positive "inertia"—Israel was home now—and because most of their family members were now Israelis. The narratives also suggest that they stayed because they wanted to. Explicitly or implicitly, most told me that they were content, more than content, with the lives they had made for themselves in Israel. With the exceptions of the still committed and therefore disappointed socialists and the few whose career goals had been frustrated by lack of Hebrew language skills or other immigration-associated problems, most seem to have found what they had been looking for. They had fulfilled both personal and ethnic goals in coming to Israel. Susan had found an opportunity for personal growth: "You know, there are few things that one can be proud of in one's life, and so this was one of the things that I'm proud of. First of all that I came. And that I realized how important this was to Dick."[44] Susan was proud, too, that she had been able to overcome physical hardships and that she had learned to communicate and to make friends in a new place. Moshe and Hadassah, who came for religious reasons, had become part of a close-knit religious and social community, a community that they helped to create and maintain. They were proud that their four children were also religious and that their sons not only studied in yeshivot but also served in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). Crossing the Suez Canal in a rubber boat during the Yom Kippur War and working at the cutting edge of scientific research, John had found the adventure he had been looking for.

Many interviewees expressed satisfaction at the part they had played, large or small, in building the Jewish homeland. They told me that being in Israel had given meaning to their lives: "It's been a wonderful, wonderful experience. Something out of this world," said Helen.[45] As Dick put it, "We love it here! This is ours. This is where we belong, where we feel whole, where we feel complete. I wouldn't think about going back."[46] John, the "accidental tourist," addressed my final question about whether, knowing what he knew now, he would settle in Israel again. His reply:

> Oh, absolutely. I've had a great life. Lots of good friends here … I'm sure that if we had stayed in the States we would be very comfortable. But I doubt that I would have had the same feeling of being part of such an adventure as the rebirth of the Jewish homeland. It's been a privilege to live in such a place in such a monumental time in the history of our people.[47]

David had come to Israel to live on a kibbutz and to escape American materialism. Neither objective worked out as he had expected. He left the kibbutz, saw the socialist ethos replaced by capitalism over the years, and at the time of the interview was demonstrating with Peace Now against the government's policies on the West Bank. Yet David, too, assured me that, knowing what he knows now, he would immigrate again: "If I've done anything useful in the world it was coming to Palestine … [W]hat I've done—it was for this that I was born."[48]

Conclusion

It cannot be assumed that these twenty-five former Americans who had successfully settled in Israel and volunteered to tell me about their lives were typical of all early American *olim*. Indeed, the diversity of their stories suggests that there was no "typical" immigrant. Although many of the interviewees came to Israel as Zionists (defined in different ways, arrived at from different starting points), some did not. All were motivated by a mix of personal, ideological, and ethnic factors that varied from person to person and that could, and did, sometimes change over time. They did not stay because they were ideologues. They stayed because over the years Israel had become home, because their children and grandchildren were there, and because they found life there interesting, meaningful, and individually validating.

Although they identified themselves as Israelis rather than as Americans, many of the interviewees recognized that their continuing personal, intellectual, cultural, and emotional ties to the United States gave them identifiable (though not necessarily unique) perspectives on Israeli political, religious, and social life. While I did not raise the question, my impression from the interviews was that the converse was also probably true—that half a century or more of immersion in Israeli life and culture gave the them unique perspectives on Jewish (and non-Jewish) issues and events in the United States. Further research should be

undertaken on the role of American *olim* as living bridges—two-way transmitters of ideas, information, and concern between Israel and the United States.

Maxine S. Seller is professor emerita in the Department of Educational Administration and Policy and adjunct professor emerita in the Department of History at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Past president of the History of Education Society, she has published extensively in immigration history, Jewish history, and the history of education.

Notes

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[2]For a discussion of the difficulty of ascertaining the numbers of early *olim,* see Harold R. Isaacs, *American Jews in Israel* (New York: The John Day Company, 1967), 42–53. Isaacs suggests that net American immigration to Israel up to 1966 was about ten thousand or less than 0.2 of 1 percent (19). See also Kevin Avruch, *American Immigrants in Israel: Social Identities and Change* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 35–36. Avruch estimates that American immigration was about 0.4 percent of total immigration to Israel in 1950. For Israeli government statistics, see *Immigration to Israel, 1948–1972*, special series 416, part 1 (Jerusalem: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 1974), table 4, 23–25, as cited in Avruch, *American Immigrants*, 37.

[3]Chaim Waxman, *American Aliyah: Portrait of an Innovative Migration Movement* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 84, 85, 87, and Calvin Goldscheider, "American Aliyah: Sociological and Demographic Perspectives," in *The Jew in American Society*, ed. Marshall Sklare (New York: Behrman House, Inc., 1974), 367–374. Goldscheider provides statistical comparisons on educational and occupational status between American *olim, olim* from other countries, and the Jewish population of Israel showing that American *olim* had the highest percentage of professionals. For Israeli recognition and appreciation of the impact of American *olim*, see Herb Keinon, "An Accent on Action," Magazine edition of *The Jerusalem Post*, (January, 2000): 14; Elli Wohlgelernter, "American immigrants said to have more impact than other Western Olim," *The Jerusalem Post* (May 10, 2001): News section 5, and Zipporah Porath, "They made a difference," Independence Day Supplement edition of *The Jerusalem Post* (April 25, 2001): Features 20.

[4]For background on American settlers in Mandate Palestine, see Joseph B. Glass, *From New Zion to Old Zion: American Jewish Immigration and Settlement in Palestine 1917–1939* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002). Published works about American immigration to Israel include Isaacs, *American Jews in Israel*; P.E. Lapide, *A Century of U.S. Aliyah* (Jerusalem: The Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel, 1961); Aaron Antonovsky and David Katz, *Americans and Canadians in Israel* reports 1 and 2 (Jerusalem: Israel Institute of Applied Social Research, 1969); Ministry of Immigrant Absorption and Israel Institute of Applied Social Research, "Immigrants Arrived in 1969/70: Their First Three Years," (Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1975); Aaron Antonovsky and David Katz, *From the Golden to the Promised Land* (Daraby, Pennsylvania: Norwood Editions, 1979); Avruch, *American Immigrants in Israel*; Robert Silverberg, *If I Forget Thee O Jerusalem: American Jews and the State of Israel* (New York: Morrow, 1970); and Waxman, *American Aliyah*. Liel Leibovitz's *Aliyah: Three Generations of American-Jewish Immigration to Israel* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006) tells the story of three families, including one that immigrated in 1947. For a bibliography of books and periodical literature see Shoshana Kaufman, *American Jews in Israel: A Selected Annotated Bibliography 1949–1985* (New York: American Jewish Committee Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations, 1985).

[5]Ministry of Immigrant Absorption and Israel Institute of Applied Social Research, "Immigrants [Who] Arrived in 1969/70: Their First Three Years in Israel" (Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1975).

[6]Gerald Engel, "Comparison Between Americans Living in Israel and Those Who Returned to America," *Journal of Psychology* 74 (January, 1970): 195–205 and 74 (July 1970): 243–251. It was published in two separate installments.

[7]Goldscheider, "American Aliya," 335–384. See also Gerald Engel, "North American Settlers in Israel," *American Jewish Year Book* (1970): 161–187.

[8]Arnold Dashefsky and Bernard Lazerwitz, "The Role of Religious Identification in North American Migration to Israel," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 22, n. 3 (1983): 263–275; David Katz and Aaron Antonovsky, "Bureaucracy and Immigrant Adjustment," *International Migration Review* 7 (Fall, 1973): 247–256; and Elizabeth Nadel, Joshua Fishman, and R. Cooper, "English in Israel: A Sociolinguistic Study," *Anthropological Linguistics* 19 (January, 1977): 26–53.

[9]Avruch, *American Immigrants in Israel,* "Aliya and Change: Traditionalizing" (chapter 6) and "Aliya and Change: Modernizing," (chapter 7): 123–198.

[10]Ronald J. Grele, "Movement Without Aim: Methodological and Theoretical Problems in Oral History," in *Envelopes of Sound,* ed. Ronald J. Grele (Chicago: Precedent Publishers, 1985), passim.

[11]Interview with Susan Rosenberg, Haifa, 20 October 2002.

[12]Marcia Resnick, *Family: Memoirs, Images, Memoir,* Unpublished manuscript (shared by Marcia Resnick with the author,) 1996, 28.

[13]Interview with David Macarov, Jerusalem, 15 November 2004.

[14]Interview with Nechama Alpert, Haifa, 10 November 2002.

[15]On the growth of Zionist youth movements, see Mark A. Raider, *The Emergence of American Zionism* (New York and London: NYU Press, 1998), 140–147.

[16]Emphasis of the interviewees unless otherwise specified.

[17]Interview with Annette Cohen, Haifa, 29 September 2002.

[18]Interview with Marcia Resnick, Haifa, 16 October 2002.

[19]Interview with Carl Alpert, Haifa, 20 September 2002.

[20]Interview with Shirley Meisel, Kiryat Bialik, Haifa, 3 November 2002.

[21]Interview with Haifa Schechter, Tivon, Israel, 16 October 2002.

[22]Interview with Moshe Goldberg, Haifa, 17 October 2002.

[23]Interview with Richard Rosenberg, Haifa, 14 October 2002.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Interview with Susan Rosenberg, Haifa, 20 October 2002.

[26]Ibid.

[27]For a dramatic account of this and other ships on similar missions, see Joseph M. Hochstein and Murray S. Greenfield, *The Jews' Secret Fleet: The Untold Story of North American Volunteers Who Smashed the British Blockade* (Jerusalem and New York: Gefen Publishing House, 1987).

[28]Interview with Murray Greenfield, Tel Aviv, 13 November 2002.

[29]Interview with Laurie Wolberg, Haifa, 5 November 2002.

[30]Interview with John Wolberg, Haifa, 4 November 2002.

[31]Interview with Susan Rosenberg, Haifa, 20 October 2002.

[32]Interview with Haifa Schechter, Tivon, Israel, 6 October 2002.

[33]Interview with David Macarov, Jerusalem, 15 November 2004.

[34]Interview with Hadassah Goldberg, Haifa, 9 October 2002.
[35]Interview with Susan Rosenberg, Haifa, 20 October 2002.
[36]Interview with Naomi Cohen, Haifa, 2 November 2002.
[37]Interview with Haifa Schechter, Tivon, Israel, 6 October 2002.
[38]Interview with Naomi Cohen, Haifa, 2 November 2002.
[39]Interview with Haifa Schechter, Tivon, Israel, 16 October 2002.
[40]Interview with Murray Greenfield, Tel Aviv, 13 November 2002.
[41]Interview with Laurie Wolberg, Haifa, 5 November 2002.
[42]Interview with Yitz Schechter, Tivon, Israel, 6 October 2002.
[43]Interview with Richard Rosenberg, Haifa, 13 October 2002.
[44]Interview with Susan Rosenberg, Haifa, 20 October 2002.
[45]Interview with Helen Golan, Haifa, 17 October 2002.
[46]Interview with Richard Rosenberg, Haifa, 6 November 2002.
[47]Interview with John Wolberg, Haifa, 4 November 2002.
[48]Interview with David Macarov, Jerusalem, 15 November 2004.

H. Berkowitz and S.S. Cohon: Two Men Battle Over One Haggadah

Mara W. Cohen Ioannides

The first American Reform haggadah was published in 1892 as part of *The Union Prayer Book*[1] under the authority of Rabbi I. Moses.[2] However, it was not approved by the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) before its publication.[3] This caused some serious discontentment among the conference members,[4] and thus a committee was formed to create an approved haggadah.[5] Joseph Silverman, president of the CCAR in 1902, gave the mission of the committee as: "A Pesach Hagada [sic] that shall contain a clear exposition of the story of the Passover, and, at the same time, be sufficiently modern in tone to arouse interest in the almost abandoned Seder service."[6] An important phrase here is, "almost abandoned Seder service." Rabbi Silverman, and much of the CCAR, believed that the festival of Passover was near extinction in the United States and that the key to preservation lay in the haggadah.

The Committee on a Pesach Haggadah began its work in 1903 with Rabbi Henry Berkowitz as a member;[7] by the next year he was chairing this committee.[8] Berkowitz was from the first graduating class of the Hebrew Union College (HUC) in 1883. As a charter member of the CCAR, he exercised a profound influence on American Reform Judaism. He was an ardent believer in the Pittsburgh Platform,[9] which lay the foundation for the theology and philosophy of American Reform Judaism. As the CCAR's first secretary and oftentimes member of its executive board, he had occasion to influence the theology of this group. The board appreciated his devotion to Judaism and his humility to the extent that twice its members attempted to nominate him for the conference's presidency. Berkowitz, who had suffered significant hearing loss, refused both offers because he felt his disability might hamper the position.[10] Along with chairing the committee that created the first *Union Haggadah* in 1905, Berkowitz wrote many books, including *Kiddush or Sabbath Sentiment in the Home* and the *First Hebrew Reader* and *Second Hebrew Reader*, all books to aid Jewish families in their practice of Judaism. *The Union Haggadah* was finally published in 1907;[11] Bloch Publishing advertised it as including a mixture of tradition and modernity.[12]

Eleven years later, at its 1918 meeting, the CCAR took the advice of its publications committee[13] and decided that the 1907 haggadah no longer met the needs of the Reform community because it did not present "the natural growth and development of Jewish life."[14] A new committee was formed with Rabbi Samuel S. Cohon appointed chair.[15] Cohon, a 1912 graduate of HUC, was a

theist who believed in a personal god. Unlike Berkowitz and his cadre of early Reform Jewish theologians, Cohon believed in the importance of existing Jewish rituals and saw a place for mysticism in modern Reform Judaism. Mostly, he worked toward a Reform theology that met the needs of contemporary Reform Jews. For example, this was the time in America when social justice was developing, and Cohon wanted the Reform Jewish principles to mirror American ethics, when possible. He was not alone in his philosophy; many Reform rabbis had the same set of beliefs. In fact, the CCAR considered the Pittsburgh Platform antiquated and a new one, the Columbus Platform, was adopted in 1937. Many of Cohon's ideals were included, although it was not the platform he drafted. To gain the support of CCAR members who were not ardent theists, he couched his statements and asked for their requests before presenting the final draft for approval. Cohon's theology had a profound effect on Reform Judaism because of his influence in the revision of *The Union Haggadah* (1923), the Columbus Platform, and *The Union Prayerbook* (1951).[16]

The committee took upon itself the task of "supplying *The Union Haggadah* with those traditional elements that lend color to the service and that are in keeping with the sentiments of Reform."[17] In the 1919 discussion following the first presentation of the Committee on Revision of the Haggadah, the Conference decided that the new version of the haggadah should be provided to the CCAR members for review before being published.[18]

In March of 1921 the Committee completed its work[19] and had a proof copy of the haggadah printed and released to the Conference by the end of that year. Starting in mid-January of 1922, responses to the new text were being sent to Rabbi Cohon.[20] Almost all were positive responses, some of which included minor corrections or suggestions. However, in April of 1922, Rabbi Berkowitz sent all the members of the Committee (Cohon, G. Levi, S. Freehof, S. Schwartz, and S. Deinard) a three-page, single-spaced commentary on their work.[21]

Berkowitz's letter is very formal both in language and structure, and standard in organization (Appendix A). Even though the Committee sent an "urgent appeal," Berkowitz's response was not quick. The request was sent out near the end of 1921, and his letter did not arrive until April 1922. There are a number of reasons for this delay. One is that he sent the manuscript, intended for reading by Conference members only, to Elsi Pfaelzer[22] for her opinion. This opinion did not reach him until February 1922.[23] Another reason for the delay, which we will spend time discussing here, is the time Berkowitz spent researching and crafting his response to the revised haggadah.

To emphasize the weight of his input, Berkowitz reminds the Committee of his importance in the currently used haggadah (Appendix A). The implication in his letter is that the Committee is revising *his* haggadah, not creating a new one. Having identified himself as important in the process, Berkowitz explains to the Committee that he has been thorough in his work and that,

therefore, his suggestions should be considered carefully. More important, he is viewing the new haggadah strictly as a revision. Quite forcefully, Berkowitz emphasizes what he and his 1907 Committee had done. They had "the very same difficulty" of balancing "the contents of the ancient Haggadah…[with the] consideration of the actual needs of the American Jewish people"; however, they had reached an agreement. In fact, not only was this guiding principle included in the "Forward" of *The Union Haggadah*, but "that statement was adopted by the Conference and constitutes a distinct contribution which both explains and justifies our re-constructive reform." Berkowitz is so enraged by this point in his letter that this statement was included as a separate paragraph, thereby highlighting its issues. His belief in the principles of the Pittsburgh Platform and the influence he carried within the Conference is the basis for his criticisms of the revised haggadah because he is both "surprised and filled with regret… that your Committee has… rejected the principle it enunciates." Clearly, this is what has soured Berkowitz against the revised text.

He continues by criticizing the current Committee for something he admits his Committee did not realize either (something of an anomaly). How can one criticize someone else for something they originally did? Apparently, neither Committee addressed the needs of the audience, despite their claims; Berkowitz comments that American Jews do not have the biblical background needed to truly appreciate the context of the haggadah.

In looking for support, he sent his three pages to at least one member of his Haggadah Committee. Rabbi Kaufmann Kohler not only agreed with Berkowitz's criticisms; he felt they did "not go far enough."[24]

In less than a month, Cohon had written a response (Appendix B). Interestingly, there is a six-day difference between the manuscript for the letter and the typed copy. Obviously, the importance of the recipient warranted serious consideration. Cohon does not deign to respond to the first page of Berkowitz's letter, which contained mostly rhetorical twists to boost the author's ego, to emphasize his importance, and to outline his logic. He is careful to answer the specific criticisms. This is not to imply that Cohon did not use the formalities of letter writing; however, his style is far more brusque. The content is based upon the theological discussions that Berkowitz raised in his letter; however, here the lecture is turned and the younger rabbi reprimands the elder rabbi. Cohon also attempts to show Berkowitz his interpretation of the Committee's goal. The Committee is still very concerned with the need to entice Jews back into practicing their festivals, just as the first Haggadah Committee had been.

Upon receipt of Cohon's letter, Berkowitz responded with a far more composed and respectful two pages (Appendix C). Its opening is more personal. In it, he repeats almost verbatim the opening of Cohon's letter, almost as if he is reminding Cohon of the promise he made. In Berkowitz's view, Cohon's letter is not a response but the opening of a debate, and he begins by delineating three points.

Cohon took Berkowitz's and others' comments seriously and made some changes to the draft. In June 1922, he sent these to the Committee for a vote. Cohon asked five specific questions of the Committee (Appendix D). Three of the five are in response to Berkowitz's suggestions.

The language Cohon uses to phrase his second question makes his feelings about Berkowitz's suggestion clear. Berkowitz explains his view in his letter (Appendix C), and his argument for inclusion is most interesting: The Conference debated this idea in open session and, therefore, the intended audience, the users of the haggadah, should know the debate. Rabbi Cohon, however, believes that this debate is adequately, and less aggressively, introduced in another section of *The Union Haggadah*.[25] Perhaps he also wondered if the users really needed to know the underlying factors in the creation of the text; after all, weren't the users more interested in their use of the haggadah than the history of its creation?

Question four refers to the second point in Berkowitz's letter, which he raised in his initial letter about the inclusion of the cup of Elijah and the opening of the door to greet Elijah. This is a fascinating debate because of the original purpose of the revision. Rabbi Silverman charged the first Committee "to arouse interest" in the seder before its practice was abandoned. In the 1907 edition these two practices were not included because of the debate concerning the Messiah as a personal or eonian concept. (Berkowitz goes into some of this discussion in his original letter.) Cohon views these two actions as entirely different, and this may have something to do with the differences in their personal theology or the theology of the Conference at the time.

The paragraph under discussion by the two rabbis from *The Union Haggadah* reads:

> The attitude of mind of the modern man has completely changed in reference to such matters as these. He can no longer regard rites and symbols with the awe that vested them with mystic meaning, or supernatural sanction. To him they are, in truth, potent object-lessons of great events and of sublime principles hallowed and intensified in meaning by ages of devout usage. This fact has been honestly reckoned with in this reconstruction of the Haggadah. Furthermore, it was necessary candidly to recognize that to the present generation, much of the old Pesach Haggadah is obsolete. This is due to the commingling of religious sentiments with much that is purely didactic; of scholastic discussions, with the pronouncement of lofty precepts; the humorous with the tragic; psalms with folk-songs; universal truths with national concepts, and the like.[26]

One can see that the language in this paragraph could be construed as objectionable by some of the intended audience. This paragraph seems a bit odd, considering Berkowitz did not believe the users understood the historical

significance of the festival. It seems far more alienating than endearing which is the opposite of his purpose.

Only two responses to Cohon's letter have been preserved: Solomon Freehof's, dated 9 June, and William Rosenau's, dated 14 June (Appendix D). Freehof's response to question two shows that Berkowitz's concerns had been shared with the entire Committee. He wrote that he saw "no particular need for" the suggested paragraph to be included, "but if you want it, it is not worth arguing over."[27] Rosenau's response is similar; he says "no—[word illegible] attitude speaks for itself."[28]

The rewrite approved by the Committee and moved from the "Forward" to the section entitled "The Union Haggadah" reads:

> In 'carrying on the chain of piety which links the generations to each other', it is necessary frankly to face and honestly to meet the needs of our own day. The old Haggadah, while full of poetic charm, contains passages and sentiments wholly out of harmony with the spirit of the present time. Hence the proper editing of the old material demanded much care and attention on the part of the editors of the first edition of the *Union Haggadah*. Benefiting [sic] by their labors, those entrusted with the task of its revision are able to present a work at once modern in spirit and rich in those traditional elements that lend color to the service.
>
> The Seder service was never purely devotional. Its intensely spiritual tone mingled with bursts of good humor, its serious observations on Jewish life and destiny with comments in a lighter vein, and its lofty poetry with playful ditties for the entertainment of the children. It assumes the form of an historical drama presented at the festival table, with the father and children as leading actors. The children question and the father answers. He explains the nature of the service, preaches, entertains, and prays. In the course of the evening, a complete philosophy of Jewish history is revealed, dealing with Israel's eventful past, with his deliverance from physical and from spiritual bondage, and with his great future word-mission. In its variety, the Haggadah reflects the moods of the Jewish spirit. Rabbinical homily follows dignified narrative, soulful prayers and Psalms mingle with the *Had Gadyo* and the madrigal of numbers, *Ehod Mi Yode'a*.[29]

The first sentence is borrowed from the 1907 edition, and the rest can be seen as acknowledgment of Berkowitz. What they have done is take the sentiment, as Cohon said, and restated it in a respectful and educational way. Rather than informing the reader about what they do, or should, find "obsolete" in the service as Berkowitz's does, Cohon's version shows the reader the intention of the service. Cohon has also taken out the terribly academic language that Berkowitz used, words such as "didactic" and "object-lessons," and replaced them with more common language that the everyday Jew would readily understand, such as "devotional" and "historical drama."

The debate following the release of the first revision of the 1907 haggadah in 1919 is quite revealing as well. Seven rabbis voiced their opinions. Three of them (Cohon, Schulman, and J. Wise) were quite strong in their dislike for the 1907 haggadah. Cohon explained that the Committee felt "that it could get out [publish] an Haggadah that would be acceptable to all—orthodox as well as reform."[30] To do this would require reinserting the more traditional elements.

Additionally, the Conference still had concerns about the preservation of the seder in American Judaism, as can be seen by the approved request of the Publications Committee in 1919 "to reprint the main portions of the Haggadah in the Union Bulletin with the hope of popularizing the celebration of the Sedar [sic]."[31] Part of this "popularization" may be the inclusion of the "fairy atmosphere," as Cohon refers to it in his 1922 letter to Berkowitz. Berkowitz argues in his response that "that was the primary aim of our revision because… the old style rendition of the Haggadah was a solemn and tedious affair."[32] He argues that because these actions are not historical but legendary,[33] they belong in the "Miscellany" section if anywhere.[34] He suggests that "the atmosphere desired by restoring or creating some new dramatic presentation of events of the Exodus" might work better.[35]

After polling the Committee, Cohon sent the 1923 haggadah to the publishers. The publication was highly praised. Berkowitz's final comment in this dialogue was a letter to Cohon on 9 April 1923 (Appendix E) that, interestingly, was handwritten on stationary on which the address has been scratched out. This letter could be interpreted as less thoughtful; however, it should be interpreted as more friendly. The formalities of the previous letters do not need to be observed because the dialogue has ended, and the previous collegial relationship can resume.

Cohon felt the praise he received from Berkowitz to "carry the greatest weight because they come from one who has grappled, perhaps in a greater degree than I, with problems in reconstructing the unique ritual of the Seder, for modern use"[36] (Appendix F). In fact, Cohon submitted most of Berkowitz's letter for his report at the annual conference. The Committee on Publications reported in 1924 that "the new Haggadah has met with instant success and the whole edition of 4,500 copies was sold."[37]

This discussion is fascinating. The rhetorical posing of Rabbi Berkowitz and the clear responses of Rabbi Cohon give us insight not only into their arguments but also their personalities. These rabbis' dialogue additionally provides us with an understanding of the changes happening among Reform Jews. The modern haggadah, which *The Union Haggadah* can be considered, is really the combination of two parts: liturgical and nonliturgical. As Cohen Ioannides and Cohen explain, this nonliturgical material is really an educational tool used to explain the history and practice of the Passover seder.[38] Berkowitz and Cohon, as well as their respective committees, felt the inclusion of this nonliturgical

material to be important because they felt that Jews did not have enough historical background to appreciate the ceremony.[39] The first Committee was charged with aiding preservation, while the second was charged with a return to tradition—as much as was permitted by Reform theology. In addition, we can see how the CCAR changed its attitude toward its members. Thus, this is a lesson in liturgy development, theology, history, and rhetoric; but we must not let that overshadow the original discussion between two men about one paragraph.

Mara W. Cohen Ioannides is an Instructor in the English Department at Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri. She has published numerous articles on the CCAR haggadah's development, codirected a documentary on and published articles about Ozarks Judaism, and published her first novel on post-Inquisition Greek Jewry.

Appendix A

I am sending a copy of this to each member of your committee HB [handwritten at top]

Suggestions submitted by

Dr. Henry Berkowitz, Philadelphia

To the Committee of the Central Conference of American Rabbis on Revision of the Union Haggadah.

Dear Colleagues: —

The printed Report of your Committee, embodying the Revised Text of the Union Haggadah, which has been submitted to the members of our Conference, has received my earnest attention. In response to your urgent appeal I submit herewith my impressions and suggestions.

As chairman of the Committee which compiled the Union Haggadah, I was more deeply interested than perhaps was any other member of the Conference in the fact that a committee had been appointed to revise this work. I was glad that the results of the experiences gained in the use of this little book since its publication in 1907 were to be gathered up and applied to the improvements of the same in a new and revised edition.

I was very much gratified to read in the Report your Committee submitted previously to the Conference and which is published in the Year-Book No. 39, p.31, that: "all that was valuable in the earlier edition has been retained and much that is distinctively Jewish in form and spirit is added."

I have made a page to page comparison of the Union Haggadah with the proposed Revisions submitted by you. I note with much satisfaction that, after fifteen years of experience with the little book, it remains, in your Revision, to so large a degree intact and unaltered. I am pleased also to note that you have found a number of appropriate pictures to add to the illustrations which

serve to give artistic interpretation and embellishment to the book; likewise, that the musical portions which make the Seder so delightfully effective, have also been augmented. In these additions you have, I feel sure, carried out the promise made in the same Report to the Conference from which I have quoted above, when you say: "We have been guided by the desire to make the work at once modern in spirit and rich in the traditional elements that lend color to the service."

No one realizes more keenly than I do, how difficult it is to compass this purpose, so clearly expressed. You will therefore receive in the sympathetic spirit in which I offer them, the criticisms herewith presented.

I respectfully submit, that your Committee has been more deeply engrossed with a consideration of the contents of the ancient Haggadah, than with a consideration of the actual needs of the American Jewish people. The Committee which undertook originally to revise the Haggadah was likewise hampered by the very same difficulty. That Committee, after a careful deliberation reached a definite agreement as to the principles which should actuate the work of re-constructing the Haggadah. These principles were set forth in a frank statement contained in the "Foreword" to the Union Haggadah.

That statement was adopted by the Conference and constitutes a distinct contribution which both explains and justifies our re-constructive reform.

I am surprised and filled with regret to find that your Committee has not alone expunged that statement from the Foreword but has rejected the principle it enunciates. I herewith quote the Statement in protest against its omission and with an earnest plea for its restoration. (See Union Haggadah, Foreword VI–VII).

"The attitude of mind of the modern man has completely changed in reference to such matters as these. He can no longer regard rites and symbols with the awe that vested them with mystic meaning and supernatural sanction. To him they are in truth, potent object lessons of great events and of sublime principles, hallowed and intensified in meaning by ages of devout usage. This fact has been honestly reckoned with in this reconstruction of the Haggadah. It aims to make it possible for the modern Jew to conduct the Seder conscientiously. This work aims to supply the demand of those to whom the old form of the Haggadah no longer appeals. It will be observed that the really valuable contents have been scrupulously preserved. The distinctively religious elements constituting the service have been carefully differentiated from the rest. Whatever does not belong to the devotional part has been relegated to an appendix. Here will be found properly classified, much of the ancient Haggadah, enriched by interesting and instructive material from history and literature, legend and lore. The lighter, more joyous and entertaining features of the celebration are thus to follow the more earnest devotional exercises."

Your Committee, without assigning any reason whatever, has abandoned this Miscellany entirely and restored as a part of the devotional exercises, some of the old folk songs and Rabbinical references which are barren of present day significance.

The jugling [sic] transition of Ki lo Noeh e.g. is impossible as a devotional exercise and citing why Hillel ate Matzoth and Maror together is a bit of dialectics whose literalism cannot be regarded to-day as very impressive.

My fifteen years' use of the Union Haggadah has brought home to me the keen consciousness of a fact which the Committee which compiled it failed to realize fully and to which your Committee has apparently paid still less heed. I refer to the fact that those for whom we are preparing the book differ entirely from these generations to whom the old Haggadah meant so much. They were steeped in a knowledge of the Bible and enveloped in the atmosphere of rabbinics. This is not the case with the modern American Jew with whom we have to deal.

A very earnest minded and intelligent member of my Congregation informs me that efforts to introduce the Seder observance among the families of her kindred and friends are very disappointing because whatever edition of the Haggadah be used, a degree of previous knowledge is presumed which does not exist. Thus, we aver that "It would still be our duty from year to year to tell the story of the deliverance from Egypt;" and again "Thou shalt explain the whole story of the Passover." Yet, nowhere is this really done. Children and adults alike are disappointed at this failure. What was taken for granted in the old Haggadah and dismissed with fragmentary references, must be squarely met and supplied to-day.

I suggest that this be done by inserting at appropriate places the proper excerpts from the Book of Exodus. This may best be done in providing the "Answers to the Questions" put by the child or children. The revision which restores the exact form of the questions from the ancient Haggadah and groups them all together is not, in my judgment, an improvement. It destroys the pedagogic value of securing, by separating them, the sustained interest of the child. But more especially are these questions too archaic to touch the mind of the modern child. "Why do we dip the herbs, etc." or the difference between sitting and reclining at a feast are matters as remote from the child-mind with which we are dealing as they are to the whole occidental world.

The real questions called out by the celebration and suggested by the symbolic articles used and other distinctive factors, are e.g.

1 – Why do we observe the Seder?
2 – Why do we use the lamb bone and bitter herbs?
3 – Why do we eat Matzoth?
4 – Why do we call this the "Watch-night"?

The answers given in the Union Haggadah, have not been simplified by the revisions you offer as far as I can see. I favor retaining the answers as they stand but supplementing them with readings from Scriptures e.g. as follows: —

Ex. III 1–16, IV, 27–31
1 – Ex XII 24–28
2 – Ex XII 1–8; 11–14
3 – Ex XII 16–18; 29–34, 39
4 – Ex XII 40–42.

The present service is generally deemed rather too short and abrupt. The addition of the above or kindred selections will not, I feel, extend it too much.

The Parable of the Four types of Sons is another feature that should be improved upon as the treatment of this Parable in the Haggadah fails to make it really vital. Dr. Ettelson has, I know, a Drasha on this theme, the gist of which would well serve our need.

I wish to register my earnest protest against restoring to the Seder table the so-called "Cup of Elijah" and against the act of "Opening the Door for Elijah." The whole motive of modernizing the book is set aside by this reversal. Your own explanations, pp. 14 and 15 of the Revised Mss. indicate that this is all purely legendary. It has its place in the Miscellany (See Union Haggadah p 83–4) as to [sic] suggestive piece of folk lore but not as part of a service which shall express not our sires but ourselves. Even as symbols we cannot sincerely use the Elijah elements of the old Hagaddah [sic], for they embody the concept of the Personal Messiah whose actual coming was held to be, not figuratively but really imminent.

Reform Judaism having set free the Messianic concept from dependence on any personality, and having enlarged and spiritualized it as the sublime ideal and underlying motive and purpose of all human history we cannot consistently retain this Elijah episode as an integral part of the Seder service. The Conference has again and again gone on record as urging the great Messianic Ideal of Israel as an era of Social Justice which must be achieved by the active endeavors of men and not awaited as a supernatural miracle. We cannot reverse that record.

Similarly, I see only a weakness in deferring to those "who observe the second day of the festivals" as your Committee does by the reference on page 4 of the Revised Mss. Reform had the courage to abandon the second day observance when the reasons for the observance had passed.

"The Close of the Service" should, I feel be amplified somewhat to bring home to each individual participant in the Seder the direct application of the lessons of the celebration. We need to have these lessons made a source of inspiration to share in Israel's age-long task of serving the cause of liberty. Here loyalty and gratitude to this land should be emphasized and the truth impressed that it was founded on, and despite its lapses, has continued to build upon the ideals of Israel commemorated in this Feast.

Appendix B

Chicago May 9, 1922.
Dear Dr. Berkowitz:

Your letter dealing with the revised text of the Union Haggadah will receive the careful consideration of my committee, while I cannot anticipate its action on all of your suggestions, I wish to assure you most respectfully that it will do no violence to the theology of Reform Judaism. If a certain paragraph was omitted from the preface, it is because of its polemical tone. Its spirit, however, was adequately embodied in the section entitled "Union Haggadah" (pp 8–10). As to the Miscellany, our minds are open to conviction. Much that has [sic] given in the Miscellany of the first edition of the Union Haggadah is embodied in the introduction to the proposed edition. Several other passages may be retained and some new ones introduced.

Your objection to the cup of Elijah and to the opening of the door for him is something that I cannot appreciate. Must we take ourselves so seriously at the Seder as not to dare produce a fairy atmosphere for the children and adults? Who thinks of the Messianic importance of Elijah when a cup is filled in his honor? We rather think of the grand figure of the popular hero. If Elijah will not visit our prosaic homes, Santa Claus probably will. Your insistence that a line be drawn between the serious and the lighter elements does not appeal to me either. One of the members of the Conference, overlooking the reference to the Had Gadya, in the printed report, warned me that I may just as well leave out the Kiddush. The very nature of the Haggadah is to mingle the solemn strains with the mirthful ones. As to the Aggadic style of the Haggadah no defence is necessary. That is the nature of the ritual. Its absence from the first edition was the chief reason that impelled the members of the Conference to ask for a revised edition. We lay too much stress on the ignorance of our congregants. Why not think a little of the men who do know how to appreciate the beauty of the finer type of Midrash? The Haggadah, while thoroughly modern in spirit and social outlook, should retain the traditional atmosphere to link us with the generation of the past.

In going over the text of Vay'hi Ba-hatsi' Halayloh, it occurs to me that a different refrain should be provided for either the fourteenth or the fifteenth stanza. May I ask you as the author of this excellent poem to supply me with your own revision of the passages? Having been so successful with this poem, will you not try your hand also on the Ki Lo Noeh? I should welcome a paraphrase of this Hebrew jingle in loftier style, to come immediately after the "God of Might."

I am glad to know that you are well and that you are busy with literary work. Your proposed collection of Rabbinic humor should prove stimulating. During the summer, I may find a little time to write out a few anecdotes for you.

With cordial greetings from house to house, I am

Respectfully Yours,
Samuel S. Cohon (signed)

Appendix C

Rabbi Samuel S. Cohon,
Chairmn. Com. C.C.A.R. on Revision of Union Haggadah

Dear Friend and Colleague:

I was very much pleased to receive your letter of May 9th with its assurance that my comments on the Revised text of the "Union Haggadah" will receive the careful consideration of your Committee and that "it will do no violence to the theology of Reform Judaism."

You have taken the trouble to set forth in your letter your attitude towards various comments submitted by me and I appreciate the opportunity you thus accord to me to place before your Committee my response.

1. My protest was made against the omission of a certain paragraph from the "Foreword" for reasons I cited. You reply that "it was omitted because of its polemical tone." I respectfully submit that if the "tone" is objectionable it may be modified but to summarily omit it is indefensible. This paragraph contains a statement of fact in reference to the attitude of the Reform Jew towards symbols and ceremonies. Of course it is polemical,—so is the very act of revising the Haggadah, the Prayer Book, etc.,— indeed the whole Reform movement may be declared polemical. This paragraph is reproduced from the Report adopted by the Conference in open session after several years of consideration. (See Year Book XVII).

If your Committee is set upon having the Conference reverse itself on a question of fact, I fail to see how "no violence will be done to the theology of Reform Judaism." [sic] which is based on a refusal to blink at facts.

2. In responding to my protest against the inclusion of the Cup of Elijah, etc., as a part of the service, you ask: "Must we take ourselves so seriously as not to dare to produce a fairy atmosphere for the children and adults?"

I wish we could produce that very atmosphere. Indeed that was the primary aim of our revision because, I know from my own personal experience in childhood and from the like testimony of others, that the old style rendition of the Haggadah was a solemn and tedious affair in the average home. The whole Haggadah was treated as of equal solemnity and therefore we suggested holding the devotional exercises with due decorum and then providing in the Miscellany—at their honest value—the legendary and folk-lore elements for the entertainment and instruction of the domestic circle.

How the Elijah element may be fitly used tho' I fail to see how you can divest it, (to the "intelligent members" who know anything about Jewish history) either of its theologic implications or of the gloom and tragedy with which the woful [sic] blood accusation has over-shadowed it.

You might, more readily I think, secure the atmosphere desired by restoring or creating some new dramatic presentation of events of the Exodus as described in the Union Haggadah p. 92.

3. "As to the Miscellany" you say: "Our minds are open to conviction." (I trust I am not to infer that your minds are not open to conviction on the other matters.) You say "Your insistence that a line be drawn between the serious and the lighter elements does not appeal to me." But you have offered no alternative by which to provide a service that shall "express ourselves and not merely our sires."

No doubt the contents of the Miscellany might be improved. Much new material has been produced since 1907 when it was compiled. The introduction of some action in which the children especially take part as noted above might well be elaborated. Suggestions should be offered for each family gathering to provide its own interesting contributions to the evenings [sic] purpose. This is the case in my own family where the Seder is a genuine joy to old and young.

Your request that I provide a different Refrain for verses 14 and 15 of "Va hi Ba'hatzi Halaylo" has prompted me to re-examine these more carefully. I agree with you and suggest for verse 14

"Soon t'will pass,—the long-drawn midnight"

and for verse 15

"When its [sic] past—the long drawn midnight."

I shall try my hand at an English rendition of Ki lo noeh but I doubt my ability to accomplish it.

I appreciate your kind personal message and shall look forward to receiving some contributions from you to my collection of Humorous experiences in the Ministry.

Very sincerely yours,
Henry Berkowitz (signed)

Appendix D

June 14, 1922

Dear Colleague:-

With the assistance of Rabbis S.Schwartz and G. Levi, the local members of the committee, I have attempted to embody in the Revised text of the Union Haggadah, the suggestions of various colleagues. To meet some objections raised by the Rabbis Landman and Berkowitz, I rewrote several passages. You will find these inserted in the enclosed copy, on typewritten pages. Kindly examine also, with special care, the changes in the English text of the Four Questions, and of the Grace after the meal, the repetitiousness of which met with objections on the part of a number of correspondents. The Hymn "To Thee Above" belongs before Grace, and "Ki Lo Noeh" should follow "God of Might". "En Kelohenu" concludes the service.

Kindly send me your vote on the following questions:
1. The local members of the committee deem it advisable to employ the Ashkenazic pronunciation, because of its use in our Synagogues, as the basis of all transliteration; and to designate ח by h and כ by ch. Do you see any objection to such procedure? ***[Rosenau's handwritten answer: No]***

2. Dr. Berkowitz has asked that we retain in our introduction, the passage of the old Union Haggadah (pg. VI, par. 2), setting forth the attitude for the modern man towards ceremonies. Do you think that the place for such polemics is in a Haggadah? (Of course, the spirit of the passage is embodied in the entire text.) ***[Rosenau: No—(word illegible) attitude speaks for itself]***

3. Do you agree with our tentative decision to omit the footnotes from the text of the Haggadah, in accord with the precedent established by the Union Prayer Book? ***[Rosenau: Yes]***

4. Shall we retain the traditional custom of opening the door for Elijah, in order not to rob the Seder of its fairy atmosphere? ***[Rosenau: Yes]***

5. Shall we add a Miscellany to our text? ***[Rosenau: I see no objection]***

I have secured the services of a young Jewish illustrator, Mr. I. Lipton—a man of scholarship and artistic accomplishment. His work will make the Haggadah a real joy. I expect to have a complete set of proposed illustrations at the Conference.

If the enclosed report meets with your approval, be so good as to sign and return it to me, together with your answers to my questions, at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely yours,
Samuel S. Cohon (signed)

**[*The Rev. Doctor William Rosenau*
1515 Eutaw Place, Baltimore Md.
***William Rosenau* (signed)]**

Appendix E

9 April 1923

Rabbi Samuel Cohon, Chicago

Dear Colleague and Friend:

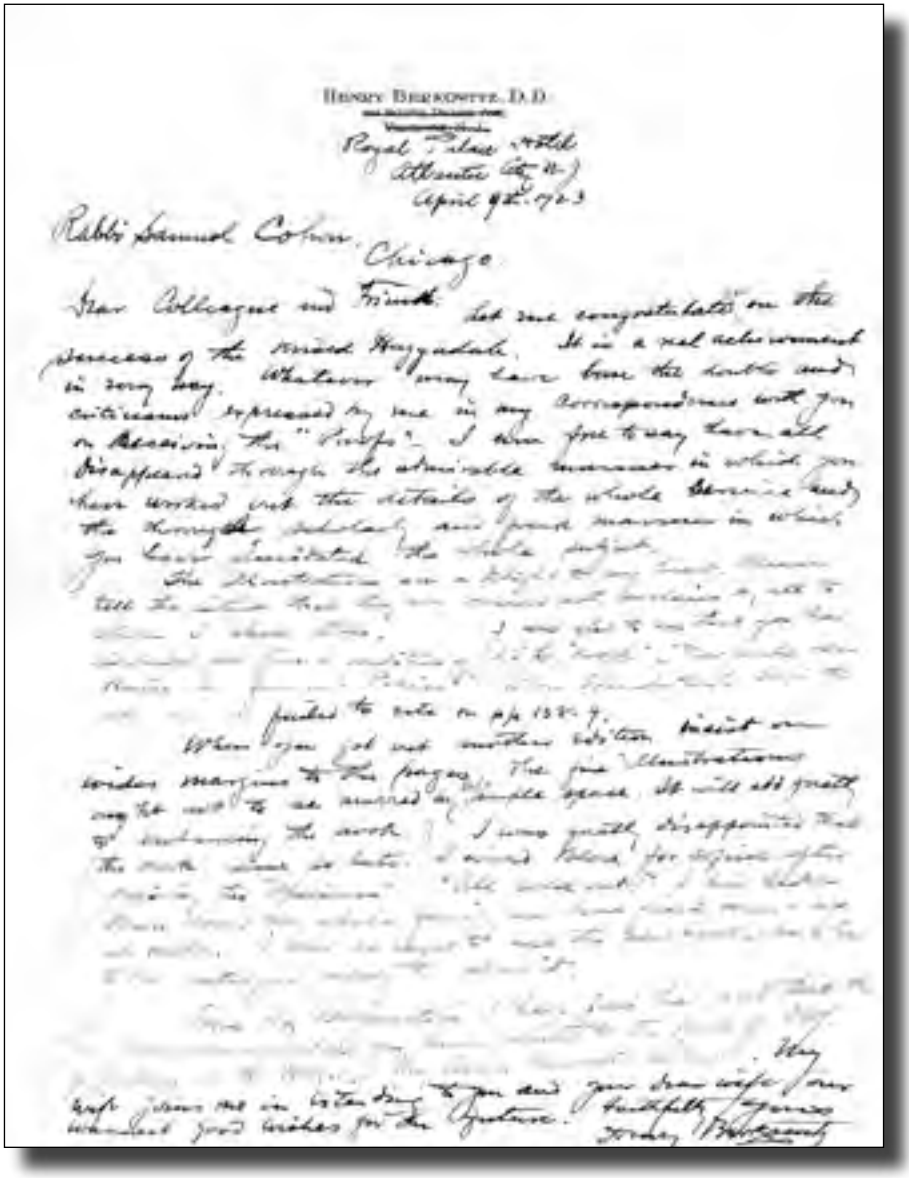
Let me congratulate you on the success of the revised Haggadah. It is a real achievement in every way. Whatever may have been the doubts and criticisms expressed by me in my correspondence with you on receiving the "proofs"—I am free to say have all disappeared through the admirable manner in which you have worked out the details of the whole service and the thorough, scholarly and frank manner in which you have elucidated the whole subject.

The illustrations are a delight to my heart. Please tell the artist that they are received with acclaim by all to whom I show them! I was glad to see that you have included so fine a rendition of "Ki Lo Noeh" — "Our Souls we Raise in fervent Praise." Whose translation? It is the only one you failed to cite on pp 158–9.

When you get out another edition insist on wider margins to the pages. The fine illustrations ought not to be marred by lack [of] ample space. It will add greatly to enhancing the book. I was greatly disappointed that the book came so late. I wired Bloch for copies after receiving the specimen. "All sold out." I had Seder down here. My whole family and some friends came—24 at table. I was so eager to use the new book—but had to be satisfied merely to show it.

From Dr. Morgenstern I have just had word that on his recommendation you have [been] elected to the post of Prof. of Theology at the H.U.C. My sincere congratulations. My wife joins me in extending to you and your dear wife our warmest good wishes for the future.

Faithfully yours,
Henry Berkowitz (signed)



HENRY BERKOWITZ, D.D.

Royal Palace Hotel
Atlantic City N.J.
April 9th. 1923

Rabbi Samuel Cohon. Chicago

Dear Colleague and Friend: Let me congratulate on the success of the mixed Haggadah. It is a real achievement in every way. Whatever may have been the doubts and criticisms expressed by me in my correspondence with you or Rabbi Wise, the "Proof". I am free to say have all disappeared through the admirable manner in which you have worked out the details of the whole Service and the thoughtful, dedicated and good manner in which you have annotated the whole subject.

The illustrations are a delight to my soul. Even to the children that I am sure will be delighted with them. I am glad to see that you have included some of the "Midrash" [illegible]

Pardon to note on pp 138-9. When you get out another edition, insist on wider margins to the pages. The fine illustrations may be well to be mounted on simple space. It will add greatly to the beauty of the work. I was quite disappointed that the work came so late. I would have for Spring after [illegible]

Hoping you and your dear wife [illegible] kept [illegible] me in [illegible] day. Yours and your dear wife [illegible] wishes for the future. Faithfully yours, Henry Berkowitz

Copy of original letter dated 9 April 1923 from Berkowitz to Cohon.
(Courtesy of American Jewish Archives)

Appendix F

April 20, 1923

My dear Dr. Berkowitz:

Your pleasant remarks concerning the revised Haggadah have made me feel very happy. While I have received quite a number of Mi Sheberachs, your sentiments carry the greatest weight because they come from one who has grappled, perhaps in a greater degree than I, with problems in reconstructing the unique ritual of the Seder, for modern use.

My failure to cite the name of the translator of the Ki Lo Noah [sic] is due to the fact that Mrs. Cohon and I are the culprits.

I agree with you about the need of a wider margin. My specifications called for the side of page of the old Haggadah. I trust that in the future editions this defect will be remedied. We used the ritual at our congregational Seder, with three hundred people, and I was very much gratified with its effect upon the participants.

I am very grateful to you also for your congratulations on my election to the chair of Theology at the Hebrew Union College. It was only after a great struggle with myself that I resolved to sever my connections with Temple Mizpah. I don't know yet, whether I have done the wise thing, but I feel that at the Hebrew Union College, I may have a wider field to serve the cause of Judaism.

I trust that you are enjoying good health. Mrs. Cohon joins me in extending hearty greetings to you and to Mrs. Berkowitz.

Faithfully yours,
(Rabbi)

Notes

*Funding for this research was provided through the Marguerite R. Jacobs Fellowship at the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives (AJA), Cincinnati Campus of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio. An immeasurable amount of thanks goes to the staff for their assistance and kindness. A portion of this paper was presented at the Midwest Jewish Studies Association conference in 2002.

[1]Ritual Committee, *Union Prayer Book* (Chicago: Central Conference of American Rabbis [CCAR], 1892).

[2]M. Mielzner, "Report of the Ritual Committee," *CCAR Yearbook* 4 (1894): 8.

[3]This question is examined in detail in Mara W. Cohen Ioannides, "A Lost Liturgy," *CCAR Journal* (Spring 1999): 79–83.

[4]Ibid.

[5]"Motion on the Report of the Ritual Committee," *CCAR Yearbook* 4 (1894): 9.

[6]Joseph Silverman, "Message of President Joseph Silverman," *CCAR Yearbook* 12 (1902): 35.

[7]Joseph Krauskopf and Henry Berkowitz, "Report of Committee on a Pesach Haggadah," *CCAR Yearbook* 13 (1903): 64.

[8]Henry Berkowitz, J. Stolz, and H.G. Enelow, " Report of the Committee on Haggadah," *CCAR Yearbook* 14 (1904): 83–85.

[9]Gerald Sorin, "Varieties of Religious Belief and Behavior," *The Jewish People in America: A Time for Building: The Third Migration, 1880–1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 170–190.

[10]Harry W. Ettelson, "Memorial Address in Memory of Henry Berkowitz," *CCAR Yearbook* 34 (1924): 174–176.

[11]CCAR, *The Union Haggadah* (New York: Bloch Publishing, 1907).

[12]Berkowitz, Stolz, and Enelow, "The Union Haggadah" advertisement, 23 January 1908, CCAR Records 34/4/8, AJA.

[13]Report of Publications Committee, 1 June 1917 to 1 June 1918, p. 7, 34/11/7, AJA.

[14]Schulman in discussion after Samuel S. Cohon, Samuel N. Deinard, Maurice Lefkovits, Charles S. Levi, and Samuel Schwartz, "Report by the Committee on Revision of the Union Haggadah," *CCAR Yearbook* 29 (1919): 58.

[15]Revision of Union Haggadah, Louis Wolsey, Samuel S. Cohon, 12 November 1918, Samuel Cohon Papers, 276/3/6, AJA.

[16]Michael A. Meyer, "Reorientation," *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 296–334; Samuel S. Cohon Inventory Description, MS-276, AJA. Accessed at http://www.americanjewisharchives.org/aja/FindingAids/Cohon.htm (2003). Julian Morgenstern, "Samuel S. Cohon," *CCAR Yearbook* 70 (1960): 176–177.

[17]Cohon, Deinard, et al., 55.

[18]Ibid. Minutes of Post-Conference Meeting, 17 April 1921, 34/12/20, AJA.

[19]Samuel S. Cohon to Charles Levi, 30 March 1921, 276/3/6, AJA.

[20]Jacob S. Raisin to S[amuel] S. Cohon, 11 January 1922, 276/3/6, AJA.

[21]Henry Berkowitz, Suggestions Submitted, April 1922, 276/3/7, AJA. (Appendix A)

[22]Pfaelzer was one of Berkowitz's congregants and an active and respected supporter of Jewish and non-Jewish causes in Philadelphia.

[23]Elsie Pfaezler to Henry Berkowitz, 6 February 1922, Henry Berkowitz Papers 25/1/26, AJA.

[24]Kaufmann Kohler to Henry Berkowitz, 2 May 1922, 25/1/18, AJA.

[25]Samuel Cohon to Henry Berkowitz, 9 May 1922, 25/1/5, AJA. (Appendix B)

[26]CCAR, *The Union Haggadah* (New York: Bloch Publishing, 1907), vi.

[27]Samuel S. Cohon to Sol[omon] B. Freehof, with Freehof's responses, 9 June 1922, 276/3/6, AJA.

[28]Samuel S. Cohon to William Rosenau, with Rosenau's responses, 14 June 1922, 276/3/6, AJA. (Appendix D)

[29]*The Union Haggadah: Home Service for the Passover* (CCAR, 1923), viii–ix.

[30]Cohon in discussion after *CCAR Yearbook* 29 (1919): 57.

[31]Leo M. Franklin et al., "Report of Committee on Publications. Proceedings of the Central Conference of American Rabbis," *CCAR Yearbook* 29 (1919): 45.

[32]Henry Berkowitz to Samuel Cohon, n.d. (post-9 May 1922), AJA. (Appendix C)

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Samuel S. Cohon to Henry Berkowitz, 20 April 1923, 276/3/7, AJA. (Appendix F)

[37]Isaac E. Marcuson, Clifton Harby Levy, Morris Newfield, and Julian Morgenstern, "Report of Committee on Publications," *CCAR Yearbook* 34 (1925): 78.

[38]Mara W. Cohen Ioannides & Stephen M. Cohen, "The Transformation of the Haggadah's Preface as Influenced by the Development of Public Education in Europe and the United States," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 18, n. 2 (2000): 27–44.

[39]Berkowitz, "Suggestions"; Samuel Cohon to Henry Berkowitz, 9 May 1922, 25/1/5, AJA. (Appendix B)

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C.S. Monaco, *Moses Levy of Florida: Jewish Utopian and Antebellum Reformer* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), xi + 240 pp. Illus.

If David McCullough decided to write about Moses Levy, Levy would instantly be ranked as one of the most incredible figures of the nineteenth century. His life might make a novel except for the fact that, while many things are too strange to be believed, nothing is too strange to have happened. Born in Morocco in 1780, Levy also lived in Gibraltar, the Danish West Indies, Puerto Rico, Cuba, England, Florida (both Spanish and American), and various places in the United States. He was more than the reformer and utopian mentioned in the book's title; he was a merchant, arms dealer, land speculator, and major figure in the transatlantic Jewish community, whose role in trade far exceeded the relatively small number of families involved.

And I doubt McCullough could have done a better job at telling Levy's story than C.S. Monaco has. The cover blurb informs us that Monaco is obtaining a doctorate from the University of London. Given the quality of this book, he should be awarded it at once. Archival research in several countries; knowledge of several bodies of scholarship, including the histories of North Africa, the Danish West Indies, and the Spanish empire, as well as the diplomacy that connected them; nineteenth-century American reform; and Judaism have all informed his work. Not only does he bring Levy to life with his lively prose, but he also provides enough contexts that will enable readers to understand what Levy tells us about his world.

A court Jew who handled trade and finances for the Sultan of Morocco, Levy's father was an exceptionally nasty man who, despite the prejudice from which all Jews suffered in that country, became wealthy, in part by arranging for the execution of his major competitor. When a virulently anti-Semitic sultan ascended the throne in 1790, the elder Levy managed to escape to Gibraltar, along with enough money to set up his son in trade with the Danish West Indies. Moving his operations to Puerto Rico and Cuba, Moses Levy became friends with important Spanish officials. He grew to be an important arms dealer and supplied the troops trying to put down Bolivar's revolution in Spanish America.

Levy prospered in his twenties and thirties, during which time Spain opened its colonies to foreign trade. His main misfortune was an unhappy marriage that produced four children and led to a separation. Levy educated his two sons and two daughters at private schools in England and the United States, but he rarely saw them, and when he did their relations were poor. Son David changed his last name to Yulee (a modification of his father's Arabic surname), entered Democratic politics in Florida in the 1840s, and became the first Jewish U.S.

senator. Unlike his father, Yulee took little interest in the Jewish community; disinherited by Levy and forced to sue to collect an inheritance, Yulee assembled documents and wrote a disparaging account of his father's life that he termed a "diary." Until Monaco's painstaking research, historians generally accepted Yulee's account.

As a Jew, Levy fell between Orthodox Jews trying to retain their distinctiveness and reformers, such as those led by Isaac Harby of Charleston, South Carolina, who founded America's first Reform congregation in 1824. Levy believed Jews should not assimilate to the well-disposed societies of England and the United States, as that would threaten their survival; he looked forward to the eventual creation of a Jewish homeland to prevent this. At the same time, he rejected the Talmud and rabbinic authority in favor of ideas of the Enlightenment. Because his philosophy did not fall neatly into either camp, Levy's activities remained marginal and have been neglected historically.

By the time he was forty, Levy had committed his life and considerable fortune to improving the lot of the Jews in particular and humankind in general. In 1821, he founded the first nationwide Jewish philanthropic society in the United States. Its mission was twofold: first, to organize schools that would implement his own distinctive variety of Judaism, and second, to create a utopian community similar to the one envisioned by Mordecai Manuel Noah. While Noah's Ararat, in the vicinity of Niagara Falls, never got off of the ground—he promoted it with a comic theatricality that nearly wrecked his reputation as one of America's leading Jews—Levy's Pilgrimage, founded in 1823, was, temporarily, successful. Located in north-central Florida in a far more congenial clime, it fared well for twelve years as a sugar-producing community until it was destroyed in the Second Seminole War in 1837.

After launching Pilgrimage, the first Jewish communitarian settlement in the United States, Levy wrote *Plan for the Abolition of Slavery,* which was published anonymously in London in 1828 and was the first major abolitionist work produced by an American Jew. (Levy's authorship remained unknown until 1999, when Monaco edited and published it in *The American Jewish Archives Journal*.) Levy envisioned a multiracial society where farmers lived simply and raised their children communally in accordance with his "law of operating and being operated upon"—that is, reciprocal helpfulness. While nothing came of this social vision when Britain abolished slavery in 1834, Levy contributed to the abolition movement by becoming an important lecturer during his sojourn in England in the 1820s.

No portrait of Levy survives; he shunned publicity throughout his life. One reason is that he preferred working behind the scenes so as not to let personal issues interfere with his schemes. Another is his ideas were too idiosyncratic to attract much support. While his wealth gave him entrée to the best societies, both Jewish and gentile, his ideas only mattered in the long run when they

coincided with mainstream abolitionists. Still, we should beware of assuming that the abolishment of slavery was inevitable: Levy was one of many whose vision of a better world contributed to the excitement and humanitarian fervor of the age. Monaco's sympathetic but not uncritical biography captures this excitement and, with it, Levy's own amazing story.

William Pencak, Professor of History at the Pennsylvania State University, is the author of Jews and Gentiles in Early America: 1654–1800.

Donald Weber, *Haunted in the New World: Jewish American Culture from Cahan to The Goldbergs* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), 250 pp.

Donald Weber's *Haunted in the New World* invokes familiar cultural signposts on the American Jewish journey from striving immigrant to native son. This multigenerational struggle has been a consuming preoccupation of the great works of the Anglo-American Jewish canon through the mid-twentieth century—among them Abraham Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky*, Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*, Anzia Yezierska's *Bread Givers*, and Saul Bellow's *Seize the Day*—as critics and scholars such as Leslie Fiedler, Irving Howe, and Ruth Wisse have shown. Weber, a professor of English at Mount Holyoke College, does not limit his tour of American Jewish culture to the celebrated achievements of a literary elite, however. His exploration of the American Jewish imagination encompasses popular culture, too—or, more precisely, artfully crafted output from the new mass media of film, radio, and television, such as *The Jazz Singer* and *The Goldbergs*, which American Jews embraced as reflections (or at least refractions) of their everyday struggles and successes.

Weber devotes much of the book to close readings of his chosen works, but he is also interested in providing the historical context for his canon, whether through assessments of contemporaneous cultural criticism, analyses of literary and celebrity personae, or his own recollections of growing up in the warm glow of Milton Berle's televised comedic shticks in the 1950s. Thus, for example, Weber situates *The Rise of David Levinsky*'s thematic interplay of money and manners in the immigrant journey toward civility against the backdrop of both Henry James's fiction and Randolph Bourne's social criticism. For Weber, James's and Bourne's opposite takes, negative and positive, on the immigrant influx in turn-of-the-century America illuminate Cahan's literary preoccupation with the immigrant as self-made outcast, severing Old World roots in favor of tenuous New World respectability. While perhaps not as startling a juxtaposition as Weber purports—Cahan was, after all, a colleague of the eminent Anglo-American writer-editors Lincoln Steffens and William Dean Howells, in addition to serving as dean of Yiddish life and letters as editor of the daily *Forward*—his comparison of Cahan with James broadens the subject

from an exploration of "Jewish immigrant fiction" alone to a consideration of the reverberations of the immigrant presence in elite American culture.

Likewise, his chapter on "The Goldbergs" combines extensive analysis of the language, rhetoric, and recurring motifs of Gertrude Berg's wildly popular radio and then television program with a discussion of the show's history and audience. Setting aside the highbrow American literary scene for the simpler pleasures of Berg's middle-class domestic confections, Weber evaluates the program as an expert reworking of the ethnic stereotyping prevalent in Depression-era popular culture in light of the universalizing agenda of postwar entertainment. Whether aspiring to the Anglo-American artistic pantheon or pitching to the Yiddish-inflected American living room—or both—Weber's cast of dexterous writers and show-biz geniuses were men and women of their times, informed by the same humiliations and triumphs as their American Jewish brothers and sisters, neighbors and friends.

Rather than simply providing a catalogue of greatest hits, however, Weber is interested in uncovering the sensibilities that produced the works in question. His aim is to tease out the fundamental emotional patterns at work in the American Jewish psyche by mining exemplary cultural artifacts—texts, films, performances—of the first half of the twentieth century. Weber is after a "social-psychological core of affects" (158) that characterized American Jewish identity throughout the period under consideration. Surveying the affective landscape of American Jewish culture, Weber pinpoints a discourse on the travails of Americanization that, he argues, has shaped and been shaped by American Jewish collective memory.

Nowhere is this clearer than in Weber's exploration of food and eating as a psychologically fraught, symbolically resonant theme in many of these works. Weber shows that the seemingly pedestrian ritual of eating has served again and again to magnify the anxieties and pleasures of acculturation and the ambiguous lure of the past. Thus, meals set in the supposedly neutral territory of the gentile restaurant are often scenes of acute anxiety—Weber dubs this the "David Levinsky syndrome"—in which "the self-monitoring… of voice and gesture signif[y] the shame and self-hatred that comes with the territory of alienation" (107). Eating with elegant manners (or at least inconspicuously) among gentiles is, Weber shows, the sine qua non of "passing" in *The Rise of David Levinsky*, *Bread Givers*, and Henry Roth's *A Diving Rock on the Hudson*. Eating can also be an instance of transgressive pleasure, however; Jack Robin's eating ham and eggs lustily at Coffee Dan's in *The Jazz Singer* signifies for Weber the democratic ethos of the show business world, which takes its cues from the street, not the salon, and certainly not from Jewish tradition. For little David Shearl in *Call It Sleep*, fixating on the borscht, sour cream, and strudel of his mother's kitchen serves a different function: It is a source of comfort, allaying the panic of being lost in the big city. For Molly Goldberg, meanwhile,

a gift of gefilte fish and (tsimmes to the gentile neighbors confirms her status as a loving suburban mother, her cooking an exemplar of a domesticated postwar ethnicity.)

Whatever their medium of expression, the works and personalities treated here all share the same basic ambition: to conjure the spectacle of assimilation for an audience that ultimately viewed Americanization as a happy ending. That this is a book about Anglo-American Jewish culture ultimately precludes a discussion of true dissent from the drama of acculturation to American norms; writers of Hebrew and Yiddish literature in America were, on the whole, both less disdainful of the Old World and more darkly suspicious of the New than their English-language counterparts, as the works of Shimon Halkin, Reuven Wallenrod, Borukh Glazman, and Moshe Leib Halpern attest.[1] However ambiguous their feelings about the process of Americanization, the Anglo-American writers and artists in *Haunted in the New World* were making sense of "making it." For them, America may have been haunted, but it was home.

Emily Alice Katz is a doctoral student in modern Jewish studies at the Graduate School of the Jewish Theological Seminary. She is writing her dissertation on Israel in American Jewish culture in the middle decades of the twentieth century.

Notes

[1]For more on American Hebrew writers and the theme of Americanization see Ezra Spicehandler, *"Ameriqa'iyut* in American Hebrew Literature," in *Hebrew in America: Perspectives and Prospects,* ed. Alan Mintz (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 68–102. On the subject of the alienation of immigrant Yiddish writers from the American scene, see, for example, the chapter "Allure of the Red-Haired Bride" in Ruth R. Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan: Two Yiddish Poets* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1988).

Lee Shai Weissbach, *Jewish Life in Small-Town America: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 436 pp.

University of Louisville professor Lee Shai Weissbach's *Jewish Life in Small-Town America: A History*, a tremendous scholarly undertaking, represents more than fifteen years of research on the part of the author. The sheer volume of material that Weissbach has collected and analyzed boggles the imagination; he has perused seemingly innumerable census records, narratives, interviews, and manuscripts. His lucid prose makes for a volume that is both readable and difficult to put down. All in all, one will find *Jewish Life in Small-Town America* a magisterial work.

Weissbach begins by describing the methodology he has employed to complete the volume. To his credit, he admits that such an undertaking presents challenges. These include the problem of defining "small-town" Jewish communities; the author bases his study on 490 localities where the Jewish population in 1927 exceeded one hundred but not one thousand inhabitants, thus giving rise to his "triple digit" community designation. There is also the

challenge of using statistical records from sources whose accuracy, because of contradictory numbers and/or omissions, may be compromised, including the 1854 *Jewish Calendar for 50 Years*; the 1880 *Statistics of the Jews of the United States*; the *American Jewish Yearbook*; and the *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*. While enumerating the limitations of these compilations, however, Weissbach does acknowledge that "the aggregate data they assembled are tremendously useful" (23).

Chapter two, "Patterns of Settlement: The Early Years," recounts a saga that is familiar to virtually all students of Jewish history: Jews had engaged in trade in Europe, and they continued as peddlers and later merchants in the American commercial centers. In chapter three, "Patterns of Settlement: The Era of Mass Migration," Weissbach attributes the rise of most triple digit communities to the influx of east European Jews (53). Of particular note to the author is the Industrial Removal Office (founded in 1901), which sought to transport Jews away from the East Coast; one of its patrons, shipping magnate Jacob Schiff, established a colony in Galveston, Texas, for this purpose (65–66).

Chapter four, "Patterns of Stability and Mobility," illustrates that there was no clear-cut tendency for Jews to either stay situated in or move from small towns. The Sam Stein family, of Greenville, Mississippi, demonstrated stability; they inaugurated the retail giant Stein Mart and maintained the enterprise's headquarters in Greenville until 1984 (74). Economic opportunities would lead some notables such as Julius Rosenwald and the Gimbel brothers to leave small towns in the Midwest for the more profitable climes of Chicago and New York, respectively (79–80). Jewish celebrities with small-town roots who followed a similar pattern included author Edna Ferber and magician Harry Houdini (both of Appleton, Wisconsin), film magnate Jack Warner (New Castle, Pennsylvania), financier Bernard Baruch (Camden, South Carolina), economist Milton Friedman (Rahway, New Jersey), and trumpeter Harry James (Albany, Georgia) (80–81). In addition to limited economic opportunities, the lack of kosher foods, poor quality religious education, and small-town conservatism also contributed to out migration (90–92).

Chapter five is titled "Patterns of Livelihood and Class." Of note here is that in small towns there rarely existed a Jewish component of industrial laborers, cigarette rollers in Durham, North Carolina, being one exception (117). By virtue of being merchants, Jews, whether of German or eastern European extraction, could move into the middle class (95). In addition to mercantile trade, Jews were involved in entertainment, livestock, cotton sales, distilleries, textile manufacture, scrap metal, and resorts (104–112).

In chapter six, "Patterns of Family Life," Weissbach emphasizes that Jews were family people and tended to embrace education to a higher degree than their gentile counterparts (127–38). Also relating to family life is his assertion that because of the paucity of potential Jewish mates, (a) intermarriage with

Christians occurred, particularly in the South, and (b) those who wished to marry within the faith frequently went to large cities to find mates. The author describes a kind of "pipeline" that existed between Wilmington, North Carolina, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for this purpose (143–146).

Chapter seven addresses "Patterns of Congregational Organization." The religiosity that characterized small-town America was reflected in the fact that in 1927, 89 percent of the triple digit communities supported a synagogue, 18 percent of the communities had two congregations, and 2 percent of the communities had three (165). As in the large cities, the Germans identified with the Reform congregations and the eastern Europeans, at least initially, with the Orthodox *shuls.* Within the ranks of the Orthodox, there were sometimes divisions along ethnic lines (171).

In chapter eight, "Patterns of Synagogue History," Weissbach states that Romanesque, Moorish, and Neoclassical, rather than Gothic, architecture characterized the more elaborate temple and *shul* buildings, while other congregations actually occupied vacated churches or, in the case of North Adams, Massachusetts, a "former theater" (181–184). Notably, the author pronounces that small-town congregations, though in some cases Orthodox, frequently gravitated to Reform as the pressure to conform and to be accepted by non-Jews proved substantial (188–197).

Chapter nine discusses "Patterns of Religious Leadership." Weissbach describes that rabbis in small towns were expected to serves as "ambassadors" to the gentile community and therefore to affiliate with civic organizations (199). These expectations, along with limited opportunities, deterred many rabbis from coming to small towns; and despite the recruitment efforts of institutions such as the Reform Hebrew Union College (215), in 1919 only "one in five" of the triple digit communities employed a resident rabbi (207). Some small congregations actually conducted Sunday services in order to obtain a rabbi who would be otherwise engaged on Saturday, while in other instances, lay leaders and *shochets* (ritual slaughterers) might take up the role of congregational leader (216–218).

Chapters ten and eleven address the respective cultures of the German and eastern European Jews in small towns. According to Weissbach, the similarities outweigh the differences, but he does make some marked distinctions. German Jews, overwhelmingly Reform, were less likely to keep kosher and more likely to conform to the mores of their Christian neighbors. German Jews possessed a lesser affinity for Zionism than their eastern European counterparts (253, 261). Eastern Europeans continued to speak Yiddish long after they had settled in small towns, and some even taught their Christian neighbors the language (268).

Chapter twelve discusses "Patterns of Prejudice and Transformation." While it has generally been assumed that small towns embraced anti-Semitism to a lesser degree than in metropolitan areas, Weissbach leaves no doubt that there

were examples of prejudice to be found. He notes that particularly in the South, Jews were regarded as the "people of the Bible" (273). In the Slavic enclaves of Pennsylvania and West Virginia, however, the mistrust existing between Jews and non-Jews in the old country sometimes carried over to the new (274). Some of Weissbach's subjects remembered childhood ostracism, exclusively gentile country clubs, and "restricted neighborhoods" (276–277).

Weissbach concludes his work with an epilogue in which he demonstrates that World War II and the immediate postwar period marked the apogee of small-town Jewish life. A synagogue building boom following the war did allow some of the small-town congregations to prosper for a short while, but several factors would soon contribute to their demise. The children of "Main Street" merchants, having broadened their horizons through higher education and/or military service, frequently entered the professions and moved to large cities. Shopping malls undermined central business districts. Some small towns "suburbanized," and their Jewish communities, while increasing in size, lost their identities to metropolitan "conglomerates" (300–307). There were exceptions; the burgeoning textile centers of Dalton, Georgia, and Spartanburg, South Carolina, actually increased the size of their Jewish populations during the postwar period (309). However, such triple digit communities would not consist of merchants, but rather college-educated professionals.

As an addendum, Weissbach discusses the method by which he examined census records to determine which residents of a town were Jewish. During the process he studied first and last names, places of birth, language, and relatives. Despite his own admitted limitations in employing these criteria, the author is to be congratulated on his meticulous and painstaking research. An exhaustive bibliographic essay and copious footnotes also contribute to making this opus, as stated on the book jacket by Yale University historian Jonathan Sarna, "the most thoroughly researched of all books on small Jewish communities."

Jewish Life in Small-Town America contains few, if any, weaknesses. Weissbach's statement that "settlements of fewer than 100 Jews were unlikely to have attained the critical mass necessary to constitute full-fledged communities" (29) might be contested by residents of towns where, despite the paucity of Jews, synagogues were constructed and in some cases still exist. The author also refers to Greensboro, North Carolina, as a "small town" (108), illustrating the challenge of whether to designate a municipality as a small town based on the number of Jewish residents or the entire population. There are, of course, notable small-town Jews in addition to the ones that Weissbach includes: North Carolina circuit rider Harold Friedman and Asheville rabbi Sidney Unger are two who come to mind. But then, this work constitutes a history of Jews in small-town *America,* not merely North Carolina.

Pedantic criticisms aside, *Jewish Life in Small-Town America* is an outstanding work, and the reviewer cannot bestow enough accolades on Lee Shai Weissbach for his monumental achievement.

James I. Martin Sr. is Associate Professor of History and is Chair of the Department of Government, History, and Justice at Campbell University in Buies Creek, North Carolina. He is writing a book on small-town Jews in North Carolina and has made extensive use of the Sidney Unger Papers at the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati.

Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin, *American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 721 pp.

Without Jews, the United States could not have inaugurated the atomic age.

The Manhattan Project had its origins in a 1939 letter that Albert Einstein sent to the White House at the urging of Leo Szilard, Eugene Wigner, and Edward Teller, three Hungarian refugee physicists who feared the Nazi acquisition of a nuclear bomb. An exceptional group of scientists—ranging from refugees such as John Von Neumann to native-born geniuses such as Richard Feynman—built the weapon at Los Alamos. After V-J Day, the challenge that confronted American statecraft was to reconcile the horror of nuclear warfare with the deterrence that the bomb seemed to provide, to achieve greater security—even though this weapon had made humanity far more insecure. In 1946, financier Bernard Baruch proposed to the United Nations a system of international control and inspection, but the arms race continued. To manage the growing American arsenal, David Lilienthal chaired the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) the following year. Also in 1947, Polish-born Hyman Rickover took charge of the nuclear reactor program of the U.S. Navy. Teller became the key physicist in the construction of a thermonuclear bomb, first detonated in 1952, a year before financier Lewis Strauss was appointed chair of the AEC. Jews such as Bernard Brodie, Henry Kissinger, and Herman Kahn became among the boldest analysts of nuclear deterrence, imagining how to risk warfare without crossing the trip-wire that would result in catastrophe.

No one, however, was more intimately associated with the terrible ambiguities of the atomic age than J. Robert Oppenheimer. Summoned at the age of thirty-eight to become scientific director of the Manhattan Project, he proved indispensable to the actualization of a weapon that could demolish an entire city. His brilliance was a given; but his charisma also enabled him to organize and inspire a team of titanic egos, enlisted to solve the technological impediments and to invent a weapon so awesome that its flash could have been seen from the moon. In the postwar era, however, Oppenheimer sought to decelerate the frantic arms race with the Soviet Union and to lift the veil of secrecy that was foreclosing public debate over the centrality of nuclear weaponry to national

defense. A seer as well as a savant, he yearned to alert humanity to the radical vulnerability for which he—as much as anyone—was accountable.

He failed. But even before his death in 1967 at the age of sixty-three, Oppenheimer's sensitive and enigmatic persona had become emblematic of the perversion of scientific curiosity; he symbolized the grandeur of the Faustian quest for knowledge that had gone horribly awry. Having enhanced scientific genius with a touch of the poet, Oppenheimer has haunted the imagination of historians as well. But among all of the books devoted to him, this biography deserves special attention; *American Prometheus* is likely to endure as the fullest and richest account of his extraordinary life.

Thanks to a childhood redolent of "our crowd," Oppenheimer got off to a good start. His German-born father was rich, his mother was cultivated, and they lavished love upon their two sons. (Frank was eight years younger and would also become a physicist who worked on the Manhattan Project.) The family taste was exquisite; three of the paintings hanging in the New York City living room were by an obscure Dutchman named Van Gogh. Religion was reduced to ethical concern and excluded tribalism, ceremony, or faith, so that Judaism was displaced by Ethical Culture. Robert developed a precocious interest in science, but his versatility and erudition were formidable. He also became polyglot. The last language that he learned was Sanskrit, which is why, on 16 July 1945, when the first atomic bomb was exploded in the New Mexico desert, he remembered the *Bhagavad-Gita* and recited Sri Krishna's line about becoming "death, the destroyer of worlds."

It was at Harvard that Oppenheimer's fierce love of physics was affirmed. His undergraduate years coincided with the efforts of leading Ivy League institutions to reduce the rising enrollment of talented Jewish applicants by imposing quotas; the admissions battle occurred within a wider political context that was contaminated with hostility to aliens and immigrants. Anti-Semitism was evident virtually everywhere, from the halls of Congress to the houses of Harvard College; and Oppenheimer's own loneliness and estrangement undoubtedly reinforced his pursuit of the abstract and distant mysteries of the physical universe. After completing a doctorate at Göttingen in 1927, he accepted offers to teach physics both at Berkeley and at Caltech; and in both institutions Oppenheimer turned the United States into an important site for the study of theoretical physics. Had he done nothing else with his life, his place in the history of American science would therefore be secure.

In the 1930s the Great Depression at home and the rise of Fascism in Europe politicized Oppenheimer. Bird and Sherwin attribute his pronounced progressive views to a reactivation of the ideals that Ethical Culture had inculcated. He contributed to Communist causes and was very close to Party members, including his fiancée and a second woman who became his wife, as well as his brother and his sister-in-law. Oppenheimer enjoyed associations

with other Communists as well. But *American Prometheus* is no better than the FBI was half a century ago in nailing down conclusive evidence of his own party affiliation. His leftist inclinations, combined with postwar opposition to the escalation of the arms race and to the construction of the hydrogen bomb, did, however, make Oppenheimer anathema to the U.S. Air Force. During the Cold War civilians such as Senator Joseph R. McCarthy were also insisting upon more exacting, less subtle standards of loyalty than had been imposed during World War II.

The result was appalling. In 1954, under the auspices of the AEC, an inquiry into Oppenheimer's career humiliated him by stripping him of his security clearance a mere day before it was to have expired anyway. No breach of security in his past was ever discovered, which did not prevent one of three members of the AEC security review board from privately musing that "almost without exception those who turned up with subversive backgrounds and interests were Jewish." The hearing was blatantly unfair. The AEC gave the prosecutor a security clearance that was denied to Oppenheimer's own attorney, whose conversations with his crushed and embittered client were bugged. Bird and Sherwin blame the personal and political enmity of Strauss, a devious operator who was ruthless in exploiting Cold War anxieties.

Oppenheimer's spirits never fully recovered from the ordeal, although he never spent a millisecond in prison. He remained the director of Princeton's ethereal Institute for Advanced Study, and four years before his death he accepted the Enrico Fermi Prize for distinguished service in atomic energy in a ceremony at the White House.

Politics had made Oppenheimer a victim, but he was no martyr, nor is it proper to elevate him into a hero. Though Japan was certain to surrender anyway, Oppenheimer did nothing to interfere with the wanton destruction of civilian life in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which he had known in advance were to be targeted. Also, he had informed on others in the 1940s and was thus implicated in the very system of suspicion that would without justification cut him down in 1954. Perhaps because of his own earlier complicity, he shriveled when his AEC accusers confronted him and failed to assert his democratic right to criticize the foreign policy and defense strategy of the very government that he had so indispensably served. In an era in which patriotism was so narrowly defined and a Jewish intellectual harboring progressive views was bound to have his allegiance impugned, the boundaries that determined respectable opinion had narrowed, and Oppenheimer was thrown badly on the defensive. What he should have done, the novelist André Malraux conjectured, was to refuse to cooperate with his inquisitors and to defy them by proclaiming: *"Je suis la bombe atomique!"*

Stephen Whitfield is professor of American Studies at Brandeis University.

Michelle M. Terrell, *The Jewish Community of Early Colonial Nevis: A Historical Archaeological Study* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), xiv + 183 pp. Illus.

The recent academic shift in interest toward studies of ethnicity and intercultural activity has created a renaissance in Caribbean Jewish studies. While Franklin Krohn noted in 1993 that the lack of available materials might pose trouble for conventional historical approaches to Jewish Caribbean study, works by Frances Karner, Carol Holzberg, Alan Benjamin, Thomas August, Robert Cohen, Eli Faber, Aviva Ben-Ur, and myself have brought new perspectives to Caribbean life by asking different and wider-ranging questions. Going beyond the genealogical or celebratory tone of earlier Caribbean Jewish accounts, these new studies consistently situate Jews into the broader context of Caribbean and colonial life, attempting to explore their lives in a manner that might shed light on broader questions of religious identity and cultural interaction.

Within this context, Michelle Terrell's book proves a welcome addition, though with caveats. Terrell brings her considerable knowledge and skill in historical archaeology to the conversation, offering through painstaking research a unique and illuminating perspective on Caribbean Jewish history and historiography. Yet, perhaps to make the archaeological study fill a book-length format, Terrell couches her work in a questionable and somewhat awkward historical context that clouds an otherwise stellar excavation.

Terrell begins her book with an intrigue: In 1957, as part of a cruise exploring various sites of Caribbean Jewish heritage, Malcolm and Louise Stern set foot on the tiny island of Nevis. Shortly before viewing the remains of the island's Jewish cemetery, the Sterns' guide pointed out a small ruin in town that local residents called the "Jews' School." Malcolm Stern immediately interpreted this description to mean the building had been the island's synagogue; and so the assumed designation would remain until Terrell began her excavation of the site in the early 1990s.

Terrell's story represents a colorful reassessment of the Sterns' experience and offers a respectful but necessary challenge to the local account. After two years of excavation on the sites of the cemetery and the Jews' School, in conjunction with diligent research in the local archives and the recorder of deeds office, she convincingly determined the ruin to be not the synagogue, but the cistern of a house occupied by relatively affluent residents throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For Terrell, however, the excavation did not end the story. Via archival records, she reconstructed a partial map of the island's seventeenth-century Jewish-owned properties and, using comments from the time, eventually (and compellingly) relocated the synagogue's original site to the plot currently housing the town's police station. Her additional work offered more than just clarity on the site itself; it commented on the intersection of folklore and archaeology, adeptly showing how investigations such as hers can

deepen our understanding of Jewish life in the Caribbean. Terrell's work at both the Jews' School and Jewish cemetery sites ultimately revealed a thriving seventeenth-century Jewish population on Nevis, with numbers she claims could compare to those of contemporary Jewish communities in Jamaica or Barbados (155). At the same time, it offered a clear-eyed portrait of the Jewish community's physical presence on Nevis, which would have remained relatively obscure from historical references alone.

Had Terrell limited herself to the Nevis Jews' School and cemetery projects, she would have produced a sterling and significant, though brief, piece of scholarship. Her somewhat ill-advised decision to broaden the work to take on Sephardic and Caribbean Jewish history, however—presumably to warrant a book-length study—leads to the publication's greatest weaknesses.

The inadequacy of Terrell's study of general history becomes apparent in her chapter "The Jewish Diaspora," in which she offers a broad and under-researched overview of Sephardic Jewry from c. 711 through the mid-seventeenth century. Reading more like a well-written undergraduate paper, Terrell's narrative does little more than synthesize general (and occasionally inaccurate) discussions by Cecil Roth, Jane Gerber, and Howard Sachar, while providing nothing of the considerably more nuanced discussions detailed in recent literature on the subject (for example, essays in Fiering and Bernardini[1]). Terrell's chapter on Caribbean Jewish history holds up somewhat better; yet even here her work suffers from the omission of crucial sources in Caribbean Jewish literature, most significantly Isaac and Suzanne Emmanuel's monumental work on Curaçao.[2] Her failure to incorporate these works into her narrative undermines her discussion, including her central claim that "no one has looked at what the analysis of a single community could contribute toward understanding the role of Jews in the colonial Caribbean" (8). While Terrell's study is indeed unique in its methods, her topic must be recognized as *continuing* a dialogue, not starting it.

Less significant, but still somewhat troubling, are the semi-fictional narrative sections Terrell uses to begin the book's last eight chapters. This technique, adopted from recent popular practices in historical archaeological writings (14–15), allows Terrell to simulate scenes from the periods that relate directly to her field site and topic of interest. While well intentioned, these narratives feel forced and unnecessary in the early chapters and at times veer dangerously close to stereotypes: descriptions such as "[Isaac Pinheiro's] features and those of his compatriots belied their Iberian heritage" (16) or the focus on a Sephardic Jewish woman's "raven-black hair" (43) reflect the limits of Terrell's imagination more than illuminate the material. Thankfully, the awkwardness of such writing diminishes significantly upon entering the heart of the study, when the fictional passages begin to match more directly her original research.

Thus, *The Jewish Community of Early Colonial Nevis* earns a deserving, if mitigated, space within the exciting new literature on Caribbean Jewry. While

Terrell's lack of expertise in Jewish history makes early parts of the book unusable, her historical archaeological work ultimately wins out, adding important and well-needed perspectives on the fascinating and underrepresented populations of the Jewish Caribbean.

Judah M. Cohen is the Lou and Sybil Mervis Professor of Jewish Culture, and an assistant professor of folklore and ethnomusicology at Indiana University. He is the author of Through the Sands of Time: A History of the Jewish Community of St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands*, and the forthcoming book* The Making of a Reform Jewish Cantor: Musical Authority, Cultural Investment*, as well as essays on music in Jewish life.*

Notes

[1]Paolo Bernardini and Norman Fiering, eds. *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450–1800* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001).

[2]Isaac S. Emmanuel, *Precious Stones of the Jews of Curaçao* (New York: Bloch, 1957); Isaac S. Emmanuel and Suzanne A. Emmanuel, *History of the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles* (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives Press, 1970).

Dana E. Kaplan, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to American Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), xxvi + 462 pp.

> A young man [in a recent] study of post-Holocaust Jewish identity among twenty- to thirty-year-old adults reveals the following when he recounts his typical Shabbat experience. After engaging in many of the traditional Friday night rituals, he and his other Jewish friends usually end the evening by singing "Amazing Grace"… "When I hear Amazing Grace," says this young man, "I think Shabbos!" (174)

Understanding such a complex and unexpected expression of American Judaism requires what cultural anthropologists call a "thick description." The contributions from leading scholars to *The Cambridge Companion to American Judaism (The CCAJ)* admirably performs this task by presenting recent developments and applying new methods in the study of Jewish religion in America. Ably edited by Dana Kaplan, the volume includes pieces from various disciplines that dialogically complement each other. Both the points of agreement and disagreement between the articles serve to highlight the major trends of American Judaism as well as areas of contested interpretation.

Consisting of twenty-three articles as well as an introduction by Kaplan and an afterward by Jonathan Sarna, *The CCAJ* is divided into two parts. "Part One: Historical Overviews" provides a diachronic glimpse of American Judaism in pieces by Eli Faber, Lloyd P. Gartner, and Kaplan himself. The bulk of the book, however, is in "Part Two: Themes and Concepts," which Kaplan has subdivided into five sections: "Religious Culture and Institutional Practice," "Identity and Community," "Living in America," "Jewish Art in America," and

"The Future." One might dispute the placement of articles under particular rubrics such as, for example, David Biale's piece "The Body and Sexuality in American Jewish Culture" under "Identity and Community" rather than "Jewish Art in America." To my mind, however, this classification underscores the numerous interconnections among all of the contributions as well as the overlap to be expected from a "thick description."

Several pieces call attention to the privatization of Judaism. Byron Sherwin ("Thinking Judaism Through: Jewish Theology in America") observes that the personalization of religion has moved Jews from autonomously deciding which aspects of Judaism to practice and believe to defining Judaism itself (118, 130). Charles Liebman, in "The Essence of American Judaism," in part attributes such personalization to a lack of consensus on what the "essence" of Judaism is. The Holocaust and Israel, which have come to play an increasingly prominent role in American Jewish identity within the past twenty-five years, similarly reflect privatization. Lynn Rapaport ("The Holocaust in American Jewish Life"), critical of an overemphasis on the Holocaust, implies that *individuals* ultimately will determine the role of the Holocaust in their Jewish lives (203). Steven Rosenthal ("Long Distance Nationalism: American Jews, Zionism, and Israel"), through a historical survey of Zionism in America, identifies a transition from a virtually unanimous, unqualified, and uncritical support of Israel to opinions, both private and public, that run the gamut. Combining "L'cha Dodi" and "Amazing Grace" simply represents a particular instance of a general trend toward individuals actively determining the character and content of Judaism.

Corresponding to the increase in personalization is a decline in forces promoting communal religion. Nathan Glazer's explanation of the suburbanization of Judaism ("The American Jewish Urban Experience") underscores the replacement of public ideology with personal choice. In the suburbs, personal choice overrules the competing claims of place, ideology, and synagogue. Similarly, the ideological content of Reform and Conservative Judaism exerts increasingly less influence on Jewish practice, which leads Lawrence Grossman ("Jewish Religious Denominations") to question the usefulness of denominations for understanding contemporary American Judaism (98–99). For secular Judaism as well, Jonathan Woocher ("'Sacred Survival' Revisited: American Jewish Civil Religion in the New Millennium") notes the decreasing sense of Jewish ethnicity. Rather than setting the agenda for Jewish content, Jewish federations support individualistic approaches to Judaism.

One might expect feminism to be cited as a contributing factor toward personalization; however, in an extremely important piece ("Choosing Lives: Evolving Gender Roles in American Jewish Families,"), Sylvia Barak Fishman rescues feminism from being the "whipping boy" of contemporary ills. She asserts that highly educated "career" Jewish women are not necessarily less

Jewishly affiliated than stay-at-home mothers (243). Moreover, feminism may strengthen the marriage bond because gender-equal marriages tend to be more successful (247), and healthy families produce a healthy Judaism. Thus, changing gender roles of men and women do not necessarily result in changing Jewish vitality (247).

The CCAJ explores privatization more deeply and accounts for its relationship to suburbanization and declining denominationalism and ethnicity by applying multiple methods to the understanding of American Judaism. In "Patterns of American Jewish Religious Behavior," Chaim Waxman discusses the useful concept of "post-materialism," according to which a society satisfies its spiritual needs after it satisfies its material needs. Since self-fulfillment and personal autonomy serve as measures for the achievement of material success, these criteria are transferred to the measurement of "spiritual success." Waxman also distinguishes between rituals and ceremonies, an idea expanded by Rela Mintz Geffen ("Life Cycle Rituals: Rites of Passage in American Judaism"). For Waxman (relying on the work of Liebman), rituals facilitate a relationship with the transcendent, while ceremonies "are symbolic acts that derive from an appeal to personalism" (104). According to Geffen, Jewish rituals today primarily function as vehicles to confirm personal rather than communal norms.

In a fine example of cultural studies, David Biale's "The Body and Sexuality in American Jewish Culture" offers fascinating interpretations of contemporary culture. For example, Biale observes that the classic film *Cast a Giant Shadow* undercuts Israeli mythology by having a diaspora, American Jew liberate the Israelis both militarily and erotically (262). Since the body is a site for defining and contesting identity (254), and representations of the female and male Jewish bodies are constantly being reimagined, then Jewish identity is also fluid—which allows space for a personalized definition of Judaism.

In addition to such cultural studies, it is refreshing to see a political and economic approach applied to American Judaism. Alan Mittleman ("Judaism and Democracy in America"), drawing on Tocqueville, notes the inconcinnity between democracy and Judaism. Carmel Chiswick ("The Economics of American Judaism") brilliantly explains the effect of "Americanization" on Judaism. Using an economic model, Chiswick essentially claims that Jewish "consumers" are more likely to engage in secular activities because they have more secular "currency" to spend than Jewish "currency." Consumerism naturally spawns a culture of personalization.

The CCAJ addresses not only the causes but also the impact of privatized religion. In one of my favorite essays, Debra Renee Kaufman ("The Place of Judaism in American Jewish Identity") argues for a more cautious approach to the results of survey data, which, by nature, oversimplify complex concepts such as ethnicity and religiosity. "Authentic" or "traditional" Judaism may not be reliable measures of religiosity (170). Since rituals like *kashrut*, Sabbath, and

synagogue attendance may possess different meanings and priorities depending on the group, these observances may serve an ethnic rather than a religious function (171). Moreover, the possibility of subjective engagement with nontraditional practices complicates the measurement of religiosity by distance from Orthodoxy. Indeed, it is Kaufman who describes the young man who thinks Shabbos when he hears "Amazing Grace."

This attention to the complex, antithetical aspects of American Judaism represents the great strength of this collection. It also accounts for some minor quibbles I have with some of the essays. By promoting Jewish education as "more than the key to Jewish survival," the piece "Contemporary Jewish Education," by Isa Aron, Michael Zeldin, and Sara Lee, reinscribes the idea of an essentialized Judaism that the book goes so far to complicate. Similarly, Yaakov Ariel ("American Judaism and Interfaith Dialogue") reduces the history of interfaith dialogue to measuring the progress of non-Jewish acceptance of Jews and Judaism (342) without attention to the developments in American Judaism articulated in the rest of *The CCAJ*. In this regard, the omission of any reference to "Dabru Emet," a Jewish response to Christian rapprochement to Judaism (September 2000), is especially glaring. I also take issue with Lloyd P. Gartner's assumption ("American Judaism, 1880–1945") that institutions such as the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Jewish Institute of Religion represent mainstream Judaism since a place like JIR "possessed the advantage of location in New York City, the center of American Jewish life with its Jewish population of 2 million, while the senior school was rather isolated in provincial Cincinnati" (53). While no one would dispute that the Reform movement at this time was predominantly characterized by anti-ethnocentrism and an absence of Zionism, I question the implication that universalist views were unsophisticated and out of touch with the Jewish mainstream in contrast to a far more attractive Conservative Judaism. Kaplan's survey, "Trends in American Judaism from 1945 to the Present," does a much better job of highlighting the antitheses of American Judaism. For example, the predominance of suburban Jewry has resulted in increased synagogue membership without a corresponding increase in devotion, what Kaplan calls "religiousness without religion" (64). Kaplan's survey makes our Jewish fan of "Amazing Grace" interesting and representative rather than shocking.

In the final essay, "American Judaism in the Twenty-First Century," Bruce Philips highlights several trends identified by the 2000 National Jewish Population Survey, including a trend toward nondenominationalism or no Judaism at all. Given the new perspectives expressed throughout *The CCAJ*, I was surprised by his derivative approach that associates the decline of American Judaism with intermarriage (398). According to Stephen Bayme, the greatest threat to Judaism is Jewish indifference (trend 3), whose cause cannot be reduced to intermarriage. More compelling explanations would include privatization,

suburbanization, postmaterialism, the cost of acquiring and the declining value of Jewish capital, the decline in civil religion, and the transformation of rituals into ceremonies.

On the heels of the 350th anniversary of Jews living in America, the time has come to move from celebration to examination. *The Cambridge Companion to American Judaism* does this in a manner that animates the study of American Judaism. No one who reads this collection will view Judaism in America as simply a pale reflection of its European antecedents. The clear writing coupled with the introductory chapters on American Jewish history make *The Cambridge Companion to American Judaism* accessible to a broad audience. To be sure, experts in American Judaism will find this work to be more of a codification of significant scholarship over the past twenty years than a new development in the field. Nevertheless, the sheer volume of groundbreaking studies congregated in a single volume underscores the dramatic changes to our knowledge of American Judaism.

Matthew Kraus is a Field Service Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies at the University of Cincinnati where he also serves as the Department's Hebrew Language Program Director and the Posen Project Coordinator. His most recent publication is How Should Rabbinic Literature Be Read in the Modern World? *(2006).*

Uri Bialer, *Cross on the Star of David: The Christian World in Israel's Foreign Policy, 1948–1967* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), 240 pp. Illus.

As Uri Bialer of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem notes in the introduction to *Cross on the Star of David*, considerable research on the relationship between the Christian world and Israel already exists. Yet Bialer offers a new perspective on this relationship in the modern, post-statehood world. Instead of existing simply as passive players on the foreign policy stage, Israelis in Bialer's persuasive account are viewed as actively shaping their foreign policy in response to the Christian world—a new angle for the existing historiography. Bialer makes extensive use of newly declassified government papers in the Israeli State Archives to reveal, for the first time, the Israeli perspective on Christian-Israeli relations.

Bialer covers a wide range of issues in his eight chapters, including questions of land rights, the United Nations proposal for the internationalization of Jerusalem, the dilemma of enemy property claimed by Germany, and the role of theology in diplomacy, as well as the problems of Russian, Lutheran, and Greek Orthodox claims to property in Israel. The most central issue throughout the period covered, however, remains the question of the internationalization of Jerusalem after the 1948 War, the Vatican's attempts to force a vote on the issue, and Israeli attempts to thwart the internationalization plans.

According to Bialer, immediately in the aftermath of the 1948 War, Israel hoped to gain recognition from the Vatican and thereby gain worldwide Catholic acceptance of Israeli statehood. However, the Vatican had grown increasingly concerned for the fate of Christian holy places in Jerusalem and had lobbied aggressively in the United Nations for the support of a 1947 resolution calling for the internationalization of Jerusalem. Furthermore, the Church had hoped, in the aftermath of the war, to gain a foothold in Palestine to launch greater Catholic influence in the Muslim Middle East. Fear of a quickly emerging Arab-Catholic alliance hostile to Israel and influential in the United Nations haunted Israeli policymakers for several decades. Far from a peripheral issue, Israeli-Vatican relations posed a serious challenge to Israeli diplomacy in the first few decades of the Jewish state's existence. As far as policymakers were concerned, "the Pope appeared to be the most dangerous challenge to Israeli control over West Jerusalem, and indirectly, to all of Israel's gains in the 1948 war" (23).

Already controversial at birth, the role of theology and collective memory placed a particular weight on Israeli international diplomacy—a problem that few, if any, nations have faced so acutely. From the beginning, the Vatican State Secretariat, Cardinal Tardini, proclaimed "there is no possibility of control or negotiations with the killers of God" (63). The efforts to internationalize Jerusalem, and thereby challenge Israeli sovereignty, revealed "motives of historical vengeance" and "the squaring of an account" (25).

Throughout Bialer's analysis, the Vatican remained a perpetual thorn in the side of the Israelis who were quietly desperate to gain Catholic recognition in order to smooth the international acceptance of the new state. Israeli efforts continued to be handicapped by the theological and emotional realities of historic Catholic anti-Semitism and the geopolitical realities of Catholic interests in territorial control of parts of the Holy Land. Bialer offers a new perspective on this political and theological struggle by arguing that Israel and the Vatican shared *mutual* distrust and disdain. Frustrated at every turn, the Israelis adopted a hard line with the Catholic Church—a stance that forced the Vatican by the mid-1950s to diplomatic initiative to resolve the difficulties.

In the early 1960s, the Vatican's decision to reexamine doctrinal matters related to Jewish-Christian relations provided Israelis with the hope that they could enter into good relations with Catholics "through the back door." If theology could be revisited to eradicate traditional anti-Semitic teachings, doctrinal reevaluation could lead to diplomatic advances. Initial attempts to include Israeli diplomats in the Ecumenical Council were quickly wrecked, however, when word spread of the initiative. Jewish organizations around the world clamored for dramatic, highly publicized changes. Resentful of the intrusion and pressure, the Council's changes in traditional theology were minimal and fell far short of Israeli expectations.

While the Israelis operated from a position of weakness in terms of diplomatic relations with the Vatican and the international Christian community, "Israel held the upper hand on the local scene" (90). Throughout negotiations with Christian communities over property rights, Israel remained mindful that frustrated countries could force a vote on the United Nations' internationalization plan for Jerusalem. Nonetheless, Israel engaged in effective and pragmatic negotiations with German Lutheran, German Catholic (in defiance of Vatican orders), Greek Orthodox, and Russian Orthodox communities. Ironically, the successful conclusion of property negotiations with Germany resulted in "the first agreement between Israel and any Christian church that openly and officially recognized the new political circumstances" (169).

A particularly important issue that confronted Israeli policymakers included the question of missionary activity in Israel. While the numbers of Jewish converts to Christianity remained small, the national and theological principle behind conversion, particularly against the historic memory of Christian anti-Semitism, grew ever more important. Forced to consider the weight of international condemnation should Israel ban missionizing, policymakers had to tread carefully. While a legally protected right, freedom of religion provoked a hostile and even covert antimissionary stance by Israeli authorities. For Israeli policymakers and civilians alike, the goal of "diminishing the Christian presence in Israel" garnered widespread support. Here, collective memory more than pragmatism dictated policy. As one government reportedly noted, "[D]eeply rooted prejudices still endure in Israel against Christians and their institutions, prejudices brought here from the Diaspora" (100).

A particular strength of Bialer's work, as noted above, is the extensive use of newly declassified archival material. His analysis is heavily grounded in material from the Israeli State Archives, and he uses this new material to offer a more balanced account of Christian-Israeli relations by introducing the Israeli perspective. He succeeds in providing a sympathetic analysis of the failures, shortcomings, and successes that the new state faced in dealing with the Christian world. As Bialer notes in his conclusion: "Israel's approach to the Christian world … was dictated not only by rational realpolitik … but also by the unique historical-emotional-religious burden it bore" (190). While Bialer's examination concentrates almost exclusively on the Catholic Church (with scant attention to non-Catholic Christian communities), his analytical framework provides future scholars with a solid foundation for further study.

Caitlin Stewart is a graduate student in American history at Emory University in Atlanta and is writing her dissertation on Jewish-Christian relations and American-Israeli foreign policy.

Warren Grover, *Nazis in Newark* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 380 pp. Illus.

With *Nazis in Newark,* Warren Grover has picked up an important topic in American ethnic history: the threat of Nazi infiltration during the 1930s and 1940s and the minority conflict that evolved over Nazi propaganda in America. Grover has served on the boards of the New Jersey Historical Society, the Jewish Historical Society of Metro West, and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York. Such a background may have enabled him to portray a new perspective on the impact of Nazi propaganda in the United States. Although key to the understanding of the Nazi threat to America, historians who have dealt with the issue have largely overlooked ethnicity on the basis of German-American diplomatic relations. Carrying ethnic conflict—the idea of racial, religious, or ethnic superiority of one ethnic group over another—into American society, the Nazi's ideology, or *Weltanschauung*, sought to destroy the American nation from within. The concept of the United States as the first modern nation, a historical experiment that defined itself by a common value system and future mission rather than homogeneous ancestry—i.e., the "melting pot"—was consciously attacked to prove the American experiment would not withstand the attempt of a re-nationalization of its ethnic groups. After all, the Nazis figured, blood-related loyalties had to be stronger than any constructions of nationhood and would result in somewhat of a "balkanization" of the United States.

Grover draws a detailed picture of the influence of the German-American Bund and similar groups during the 1930s and 1940s in Newark, a suburb of New York City. He shows us right at the community level how civic unrest was created and where it took place. Here on the local level the story of America's Nazis takes on the immediacy of our own neighborhoods and opens up a new understanding of the subject. Grover shows that the conflict evolved not simply between Germans and Jews; rather, the author detects factions within "Germans" and "Jews." Some of the former are ardent Nazis; others identify as Socialists, bourgeois anti-Nazis, or "Americans" and cooperate with anti-Nazi groupings of various backgrounds. The book hints at the friction that the Bund exposed in German-American life by the forced "Aryanization" of their numerous clubs and societies, which separated German Jews from fellow Germans. Grover also highlights the involvement of ethnic churches, which may be an inspiration for future work on the topic.

Grover tells his story in nine chronologically arranged chapters, an introduction, and a conclusion. Starting with the first local reactions to the emergence of the Friends of the New Germany in 1933, the reader is introduced to Newark's ethnic groupings, their leadership, and their press. In the second chapter the author gives details about the Minutemen, a group of mainly Jewish ward fighters and gangsters, whom Grover sees as the center of Jewish resistance to local

Nazism. He traces their early connection with the Jewish War Veterans and YMHA, which were soon to criticize the Minutemen's violent proclivities. The third chapter discusses the position of the Friends of the New Germany, the first German-American Nazi group, and their relationship with the larger German community and their organizations in the New York area. The United German Societies of Greater New York, a formerly independent regional roof organization, was coordinated and "Aryanized" by the Bund, which consequently tried to turn "German Day," an annual celebration of German immigration to America, into a Nazi celebration. Efforts to fight the Bund's activities included local legislation, the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League (NSANL), and the Committee on Un-American Activities or McCormack-Dickstein Committee.

In chapter four, Grover introduces the German-Jewish physician S. William Kalb, who is depicted as a local hero in the fight against Nazism. Kalb began as a major local organizer of the anti-Nazi boycott for the Jewish War Veterans and other Jewish organizations, such as the NSANL. A fifth chapter traces the reaction of local "liberals," such as Democrats, women's groups, peace groups, and liberal churches. Grover also portrays the rise of a new Nazi organization, the German-American Bund, to succeed the Friends of the New Germany. It was the political ambition and style of its "führer," Fritz Kuhn, that made this group a large and even more aggressive tool of Nazism. The Bund was well connected with American anti-Semitic, anti-Communist, "Christian," and Fascist-minded groups, which made it a far bigger threat than its predecessor. In his seventh chapter the author shows that it was *Kristallnacht* in 1938, in conjunction with the *Anschluss* of the ethnic German regions of Czechoslovakia, that added to the social and political tensions in New York's suburbs. Nazi anti-Semitism and Nazi ethnic policy seemed to grow closer. This not only caused Italian-Americans to express their opposition to anti-Semitism, but several Newarkers pledged solidarity with the Czechs, and even Czech-Americans joined protesters against Nazism. This was the time when Minutemen, the NSANL, liberals, and Communists were increasingly forming a united front against Nazism. Even the Catholic church and other Christian groups supported initiatives against Nazi anti-Semitism in America. More dramatic still were the results of the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the beginning of World War II in Europe on the Newark opposition, which separated the Communists from the anti-Nazi alliance. Both the NSANL and the Jewish Boycott Committee were weakened by the outbreak of the war and the British naval blockade of Germany. This left the Minutemen, joined by Polish immigrants, as the major opponents to Newark's Nazi movement, which had gained support from the Christian Front. In his last chapter, Grover explains how America's entry into the war changed the local scene: the Bund was illegal and barely visible; "opposition to Nazism" was now turning into patriotism and was integral to national unity in wartime.

Grover's focus is valuable and his story is well written, but it is not an academic treatise. There remains a lack of systematic historical analysis and research on the mechanics of American ethnic tensions or cooperation during this period. Although well documented, the book needs a more analytic approach, by telling the story around the Minutemen and Dr. Kalb, whom he depicts as the only true foes of Nazism in an American community such as Newark. Grover gives the impression that only the gangsters were fighting against the "evil" that the Bund represented. But in New York City there were other active opponents, such as attorney Louis Nizer; and German Jews who were excluded from German-American social life knew well where Nazism was heading. Culturally close to Germany and German-Americans, several of them—including Joe Roos of Chicago and Los Angeles and his more prominent uncle, Julius Klein—were alert to Nazism in America at an early stage and organized against it. The Klein family applied some Anti-Defamation League methods to fight such anti-Semitism. Ernest Klein, Julius's brother, tried to use his position as editor to gain control over a large German press consortium, *The National Weeklies*, to educate German-Americans at large about Nazism. Many such German Jews were instrumental in gathering information on Nazi activities for federal agencies, including intelligence services, which had an important impact. We should not be misled by the stereotype of the bourgeois "German Jew" as an easy victim to Nazism. Here, research needs to be done in American Jewish history.

Grover probably never intended to reach an exclusively academic audience, but he does provide a well-documented story on the impact of the idea of Nazi racial superiority and how it was resisted. *Nazis in Newark* will succeed in raising the scholarly interest in research topics such as ideology and ethnicity. Thanks to Warren Grover, such an agenda is now more visible.

Dr. Cornelia Wilhelm teaches Early Modern and Modern History at the Historical Seminar of the Ludwig-Maximilians-University of Munich. Her specialties include American history, Jewish history, German-American relations, and contemporary German history. She is the author of Bewegung oder Verein? Nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik in den USA, 1933–1945 *and the recently published* Deutsche Juden in Amerika: Bürgerliches Selbstbewusstsein und jüdische Identität in den Orden B'nai B'rith und Treue Schwestern, 1843–1914.



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American Conference of Cantors

Scrapbook containing publicity and other materials pertaining to the ACC, compiled by Oreen Zeitlin. 1993–1994.

Received from Oreen Zeitlin, Highwood, IL

Baum, Richard L.

The Sevransky and Baum Families: A History. 2005.

Received from Richard L. Baum, New York, NY

Borowitz, Eugene B.

Transcript of an interview concerning his life and career at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. 19 February 2004.

Received from HUC-JIR, New York, NY

Brichto, Herbert Chanan

Correspondence concerning his work and activity at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion; together with condolence letters to his family written at the time of his death. 1952–1996.

Received from Mira Brichto, Cincinnati, OH

Bubis, Gerald B.

Guide Yourself Accordingly: A Memoir. 2005.

Received from Gerald B. Bubis, Los Angeles, CA

Celebrate 350: Jewish Life in America 1654–2004 and the Commission for Commemorating 350 Years of American Jewish History

Records of both national commissions, including posters commissioned by Celebrate 350 honoring the 350th anniversary of Jewish settlement in America, together with the official medal of the 350th anniversary and a DVD of the National Dinner Celebrating 350 Years of Jewish Life in America, featuring President George W. Bush as keynote speaker, 14 September 2005.

Received from Celebrate 350 and from the Commission for Commemorating 350 Years of American Jewish History.

Chyet, Stanley F.

Collection of personal and professional papers, containing writings, correspondence, poetry, and articles by Prof. Chyet, together with paperwork pertaining to his organizational affiliations, photographs, and miscellaneous items. 1952–2001.

Received from Stanley F. Chyet, the Chyet family, and HUC-JIR, Los Angeles, CA

Conyer, Bryan

"A Human Perspective on Judaism: A One Year Course for the Tenth Grade in a Progressive Day School. A Curriculum Guide." A term project submitted to the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Rhea Hirsch School of Education, containing a curriculum designed for high school students. n.d.

Received from HUC-JIR, Los Angeles, CA

Einstein, Albert

Copies of letters from Einstein to Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, along with a letter from Wise to Herbert Kaufman concerning these letters; together with a photograph of Wise and Einstein, signed by Wise. 1932–1933.

Received from Herbert J. Kaufman, Mount Kisco, NY

Fort Worth, Texas

Minutes of Congregation Ahavath Sholom, 1892–1905 and 1928–1939; minutes of the Chevra Kadisha of Fort Worth, 1910–1939; and minutes of the Fort Worth Jewish Institute, 1911–1919.

Received from Hollace Weiner, Fort Worth, TX

Goldman, Ruth

And These are Jews: A Documentary by Ruth Goldman. A documentary detailing the history and lifestyle of the German Jewish community of Cincinnati. 2006.

Received from Ruth Goldman, New York, NY

Goldstein, Israel

Oral history interview concerning his life and career as a cantor and as director of the School of Sacred Music of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. 6 June 2006.

Received from HUC-JIR, New York, NY

Grand Forks Jewish Congregation (Grand Forks, ND)

Minutes of the congregation, 1915, 1923–1925, together with a photograph of a community gathering in the 1920s.

Received from Mary Anne Winig, Lafayette, CA

Greater Chicago Jewish Folk Arts Festival (Chicago, IL)

Records concerning the organization and operation of the bi-annual festival, including correspondence, advertising, contracts, meeting agendas, applications, permits, prospectuses, budgets, and other documents. 1980–2004.

Received from Michael M. Lorge, Chicago, IL

Hebrew Congregation (Saint Thomas Harbor, Virgin Islands)

Original records of the congregation, including marriage certificates and death records, 1850–1971; protocol of births, 1786–1934; and miscellaneous records, 1817–1850.

Received from Clementine Kaufman, Baltimore, MD

HUC-JIR

Minutes and papers of a retreat held by the Task Force on the Schools of Education at HUC-JIR. 10–12 December 2006.

Received from Sam Joseph, Cincinnati, OH

Holtzmann, Fanny E.

Oral history interview conducted by the William E. Wiener Oral History Library of the American Jewish Committee. 1977.

Received from Ellen H. Propp, New York, NY

Israel, Richard J.

Sermons, writings, correspondence, and resources pertaining to Rabbi Israel's professional activities serving Hillel organizations at UCLA, Yale, and other universities located in the greater Boston area. Also contains materials from his student years at HUC-JIR and resource material relating to Jewish identity, education, rituals, life cycle events, and holidays. 1949–2000.

Received from Sherry Israel, Newton, MA

Isaacs, Ann Fabe

Personal papers, including correspondence, notebooks, sketchbooks, musical manuscripts, audio recordings, photographs, and publications related to her work as founder of the National Association of Gifted Children and the National Association of Creative Children and Adults. 1940–1991.

Received from Ann Fabe Isaacs, Cincinnati, OH

Kastner, Merle

Family history books authored by Kastner, including the Kastner, Ostrow, Lissansky, Garbarski, Sydansk, Greenberg, and Merritz families.

Received from Merle Kastner, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

King, Arthur G.

Papers relating to the professional and personal life of Arthur G. King, a Cincinnati area physician and veteran of World War II. The papers include extensive correspondence with friends and associates, together with his writings (including history of Cincinnati and its Jewish community), memoirs of his service in World War II, and photographs. 1906–2002.

Received from Deborah Worth, Bloomington, IN

Liebman, Joshua Loth

Correspondence with Rabbi Edgar F. Magnin, 1944–1948, together with original issues of articles written by Rabbi Liebman and published in various periodicals, 1940–1948.

Received from Jody Gorran, Delray Beach, FL

Lorge, Eudice G.

"Remembering Rabbi Ernst M. Lorge: An Interview with Eudice G. Lorge, conducted by Laura Baden." 22 December 2005.

Received from Michael M. Lorge, Chicago, IL

Moses, Raphael J.

Papers concerning Moses, a Confederate Major and Southern statesman, including Civil War and Moses family items and documents, ca. 1860–1890, gathered and compiled by Melvin A. Young.

Received from Melvin A. Young, Chattanooga, TN

North Shore Congregation Israel (Glencoe, IL)

Records of the congregation, 1924–1999, consisting of service bulletins, membership records, nearprint, sermons, and photographs.

Received from David Rothschild, Chicago, IL

Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute

Records of the Institute compiled by Michael M. Lorge during his term as Chair of the Institute's Board of Governors. 1997–2001.

Received from Michael M. Lorge, Chicago, IL

Pacernick, Gary

Collection of papers compiled by Prof. Pacernick (Department of English, Wright State University, Dayton, OH), as part of his oral history project on American Jewish poets. Includes correspondence with, among others, Marge Piercy, Jerome Rothenberg, and Philip Levine. Also includes a recording, with transcript, of an interview with Stanley Kunitz together with a recording of an interview with Allen Ginsberg. 1981–2004.

Received from Gary Pacernick, Dayton, OH

Rifkind, Simon H.

Points and Authorities: Selected Public Papers and Opinions; a collection of Judge Rifkind's legal and personal writings prepared by his family and friends in celebration of his 75th birthday. 1976.

Received from Robert S. Rifkind, New York, NY

Roselawn Synagogue (Cincinnati, OH)

Records of the synagogue, 1952–2006, including membership rosters, board minutes, weekly bulletins, and photographs.

Received from Roselawn Synagogue, Cincinnati, OH

Sarna, Jonathan D.

Letter to his parents while on a trip to the Soviet Union relating his experiences during his visit and his observations on the lives of Jews in the USSR. 27 March 1986.

Received from Jonathan D. Sarna, Waltham, MA

Skirball Institute on American Values

The Skirball Institute on American Values was created as an agency of the American Jewish Committee in 1985. Materials in the collection include correspondence and major event records. The collection also includes biography files and photographs of prominent scholars associated with the Institute. 1984–2003.

Received from Eugene Mornell, Los Angeles, CA

Sokobin, Alan Mayor

Correspondence and papers pertaining to his career as rabbi at Congregation Shomer Emunim, Sylvania, Ohio. 2000–2005.

Received from Alan M. Sokobin, Sylvania, OH

Steinberg, Paul M.

Collection pertaining to Rabbi Steinberg's life and work as Vice President and Dean of the New York campus of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion together with his personal interests and involvements. Includes material on the academic, administrative, and communal work of HUC-JIR as well as his work with numerous foundations and causes, including the Gimprich Family Foundation and the Heller Foundation. 1950–2005.

Received from Trudy Steinberg, New York, NY

Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester (Chappaqua, NY)

History of the congregation, 1951–2000; congregational newsletter, 1955–1961, 1964–1983 and 1993–1994; continuing education materials, 1966–1980; and liturgy, 1925–2000.

Received from Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester, Chappaqua, NY

Temple Beth Israel (Jackson, MS)

Correspondence and scattered materials, 1967–1968, gathered and compiled by Claire Fierberg Levy Hamlin concerning the bombing of Temple Beth Israel in 1967.

Received from Claire Fierberg Levy Hamlin, Flowery Branch, GA

Union for Reform Judaism

Files of Dru Greenwood during her tenure as director of the URJ's Department of Outreach and Synagogue Community. 2003–2004.

Received from Dru Greenwood, New York, NY

Untermyer, Samuel

Papers of Samuel Untermyer, New York City lawyer and communal leader, pertaining to his legal and civic involvements, including speeches, catalogs of art holdings, last will and testament, family correspondence, Untermyer Trust correspondence, and scrapbooks, 1873–1952. Together with a collection of articles and documents by and about Untermyer compiled by Marvin Dickman as part of his research on Untermyer's life and work.

Received from Frank Untermyer, Chicago, IL, and Marvin Dickman, Highland Park, IL

Weiner, Hollace A.

The Jewish Junior League: The Rise and Demise of the Fort Worth Council of Jewish Women, 1901–2002. 2005.

Received from Hollace A. Weiner, Fort Worth, TX

Wise, James Waterman

Scrapbook documenting the life and activities of the communal worker, editor, author, rabbi, and son of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise. 1901–1983.

Received from Stephen A. Wise, New Canaan, CT

World Jewish Congress

Extensive collection (250 linear feet) of news clippings and publications gathered by the New York office of the World Jewish Congress pertaining to countries, individuals, and topics involved with and of interest to the WJC from the 1930s to the 1970s. Includes material and information on the Holocaust, post-war resettlement, Israel, the rise of Communism, and the WJC's work with the United Nations, among many other topics.

Received from the World Jewish Congress, New York, NY

Yoffie, Eric H.

Audio recording, with transcript, of Rabbi Yoffie's address to the student body at Liberty University. 26 April 2006.

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