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## Book Reviews

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**Jeffrey S. Gurock, ed., *Conversations with Colleagues: On Becoming an American Jewish Historian* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2018), 270 pp.**

Jeffrey Gurock's *Conversations with Colleagues: On Becoming an American Jewish Historian* serves as a group Festschrift, a celebration of American Jewish history's maturation, a crash course for those of us not in the field, and more. These sixteen reflections, ranging from five to fifteen pages each, resemble job talks given by senior scholars describing their intellectual arcs, with the distinct advantage that these scholars already hold (or held) their positions. While the reader will not know who declined invitations to contribute to this work, the historians (and one anthropologist) included have made field-defining contributions. Humor, irony, and gratitude provide the key notes—fitting for a group of scholars who often did not set out to become American Jewish historians but nevertheless built the field successfully. (Of course, even the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg did not think she was going to be a Supreme Court Justice, much less the notorious RBG.) Some of these scholars chose American Jewish history from the start; some of these scholars had well-launched careers before their focus turned to American Jewish history. If the budding *maskil* was the smart kid who hated *heder* most, this crowd comprises the smart kids who liked Hebrew school best—although, as Gerald Sorin noted, not as much as stickball. It would be pointless to summarize the impressive contributions traversed in these pages: These authors know their works best and write about them superbly. This review makes some brief outsider observations.

The speed with which this field burgeoned—from a few iconic figures at mid-twentieth century, such as Jacob Rader Marcus, Salo Baron, Oscar Handlin, and Moshe Davis (Gurock, "Introduction," 11), into a permanent feature of the humanities in the academy—is noteworthy. When one compares this to the battle to get Jewish

studies a university perch in Germany, the contrast astonishes. Leopold Zunz fired his opening salvo in 1808. Martin Buber took his chair at the University of Frankfurt in the 1920s. Jews taught other subjects, mainly in the sciences; rabbinical seminaries and lay societies discussed Jewish history and literature, but the professionalization of an academic field requires institutional recognition.

Noteworthy also is the location of this intellectual activity. Jacob Marcus's role in the founding of the American Jewish Archives and this journal loom large, not only for Gary Zola, student and successor, but in the reminiscences of scholars who have spent time working at the AJA. For non-Americanists, Salo Baron will be recalled as a polymath, medievalist, and champion of a more affirmative view of the Diaspora than either his predecessors or his Zionist contemporaries. He also encouraged young scholars in this field, and his polemics against lachrymosity seem to have had an impact. For all the assertiveness in championing the field, none of these masters has made American antisemitism their primary intellectual focus. Alongside Marcus and Baron, Jonathan Sarna plays a dual role in this book as student and teacher: Sarna chose American Jewish history as his field earlier than most and mentored some of the other distinguished figures in these pages. His is the longest entry, fittingly. Cincinnati, Boston, and, of course, New York have been the germinating locations of American Jewish historiography, efforts to champion other regions notwithstanding. (See native New Yorker Deborah Dash Moore's seminal *To the Golden Cities* or Mark Bauman's entry on his campaign for the legitimizing of Southern Jewish history.)

Noteworthy too is the bottom-up focus of much American Jewish historiography. Naomi W. Cohen taught several of the figures in this book at Hunter College and Columbia University and advised still others. Thoroughly grounded in Jewish intellectual and religious developments, Cohen's pioneering work in this field has dealt with American Jewish leadership, both biographical and organizational. Her studies of American Zionism often highlighted the political and institutional more than the ideological aspects of this movement. The field's "greatest hits," many of which these contributors authored, tend toward social history, communal history, and material history

rather than intellectual history. Works on Buber-Scholem-Rosenzweig alone comprise a library. By contrast, Stephen Whitfield, who characterizes his own point of origin as a “plain Americanist,” notes that Horace Kallen has not generated a modern biography. Abraham Joshua Heschel appears once in this volume (86), as a symbol of civil rights activism; Joseph Soloveitchick, not at all. Religious history is well represented in books by Sarna, Prell, Joselit, Schwartz, and Nadell. Dianne Ashton’s biography of Rebecca Gratz, Shuly Rubin Schwartz’s work on *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, and Marc Lee Raphael’s *The Synagogue in America* push the envelope in terms of religious studies as well. The rise of American Jewish history corresponds to the high-water mark of social history. This positive pull, alongside the negative push against American (and American Jewish) intellectual history that many of these contributors experienced early in their careers, appears to have had a noticeable impact on the direction of the field.

The most striking aspect of American Jewish history, however, is its gender balance. Half of the contributors to this volume are women, and any reader would say: rightly so! Yet few other areas of Jewish studies have been so evenly represented from the start. As Prell noted, the Reform movement officially acknowledged religious equality of men and women in the 1840s, only to wait until 1972 to ordain its first female rabbi. Access always matters: Any Jewish male at any time could stroll into a yeshiva and learn, or in my case, fail to learn, how to read Gemara. For women, this was more difficult and the hurdles more numerous. And not only for Talmud. The politics here recall the early generations of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, in which scholarship seemed designed to advance progressive reform. Works such as Nadell’s *Women Who Would Be Rabbis* and Schwartz’s *The Rabbi’s Wife* marry scholarship and advocacy seamlessly. In all these works, the experiences and often differing roles of men and women are taken into full account. From this perspective, Beth Wenger’s *New York Jews and the Great Depression* innovates in more than one way. Wenger, the youngest contributor to this volume, wrote her doctorate with Paula Hyman, a figure (like Naomi Cohen) whose work and encouragement exerted a profound influence. Casually judging by

the names and books of junior scholars, this gender equality trend has not only continued but expanded to many non-Jews interested in the experiences of American Jews, however defined.

My only reservation about this volume is its unspoken message: that given enough talent, persistence, and guidance, you, too, can become a venerated scholar with stories to tell. I am not so confident that is true—even in America. But this volume forbids such an Eeyore-like conclusion: alongside their other admirable qualities, one appreciates the energy, enthusiasm, and collegiality still animating these contributors, and their fortunate students.

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**Daniel G. Hummel, *Covenant Brothers: Evangelicals, Jews, and U.S.-Israeli Relations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 317 pp.**

Daniel Hummel's *Covenant Brothers* focuses on the growth of Christian Zionism by highlighting the intersections of evangelical engagement in American politics, interfaith alliances, and American-Israeli relations. Hummel argues this "triangular relationship—international and inter-religious in scope—created new categories of belonging and demolished long-held assumptions" (7). Whereas past scholarship has often emphasized evangelicals' end time scenarios involving Jews, Hummel instead underscores the interfaith work of American Jews and theologically conservative Protestants to promote an evangelical Christian Zionist embrace of Israel.

The monograph is organized in three sections, each of which astutely demonstrates the "covenantal" partnership alluded to in Hummel's title. The three-part structure of "roots," "shoots," and "branches" correlates to the terms apostle Paul used in Romans 11 to illustrate the connections

between Jews and Christians. According to Hummel, “the implications of Paul’s writings are clear to Christian Zionists: the two faiths—the two covenanted peoples of Israel and the church—have a shared root, a shared faith, a shared fate” (5). Christian Zionists further understand these collective histories through an interpretation of Genesis 12:3. They take this verse to mean that Abraham’s descendants (understood as the nation of Israel) will facilitate God’s blessings to everyone on earth. Evangelicals thus consider this as evidence of a covenantal relationship between Jews and Christians, an interfaith alliance that Christian Zionists have looked to strengthen.

The first section examines the years from 1948 to 1967 to trace the postwar evolution of American evangelical political involvement with Israel. Hummel concentrates his narrative on evangelicals who spent significant time in Israel. Chapter one argues that the small community of evangelical missionaries in Israel had a unique perspective with which to reconstruct the meaning of reconciliation between Jews and Christians. The second chapter examines the role biblical archaeology has played in evangelical concepts of a Judeo-Christian heritage. Hummel’s analysis sheds new light on interfaith dialogue by demonstrating how Christian Zionists used archaeological findings to prove the Bible’s authority and, in turn, to connect Judeo-Christian thought to biblical verses. Chapter three analyzes the influence of the American Institute of Holy Land Studies—a graduate school in Jerusalem established by G. Douglas Young, the “first modern Christian Zionist activist”—on the larger Christian Zionist movement (58).

The “shoots” (1967–1976) and “branches” (1976–2018) sections explain the growth of Christian Zionism from its “roots.” In these chapters, Hummel states that a combination of American Jewish political lobbying, international diplomacy, and Christian Zionism shaped American-Israeli relations. Hummel demonstrates the active involvement of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Religious Affairs—and not solely the participation of American religious or political leaders—in promoting the “special relationship” between the United States and Israel (161). His discussion of Holy Land tourism intriguingly suggests that evangelical sightseeing trips to both ancient religious sites and contemporary neighborhoods fueled the growth of

Christian Zionism. Hummel also offers a fascinating discussion of how Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and American televangelist Jerry Falwell became the spokespeople for the American-Israeli and Jewish-evangelical relationships. The final two chapters effectively elucidate the contemporary status of American-Israeli relations. The historical and theological background for the formation of Christians United for Israel (CUFI) and the general rise of a global Christian Zionist movement is useful for understanding more recent events, including the 2018 relocation of the American embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Hummel's narrative closely attends to the evolving relationship between Jews and evangelicals. One question that arises is why Hummel considers the December 1975 conference co-sponsored by the American Jewish Committee and the American Institute of Holy Land Studies to be "the first formal Jewish-evangelical dialogue" (147). Throughout the late 1960s, evangelical and Jewish communal leaders met individually and in small groups to address theological concerns such as proselytization and end-time scenarios that might inhibit interfaith relations. Beginning in 1969, the American Jewish Committee and the Southern Baptist Convention held yearly interreligious conferences. Further articulating which Jewish-evangelical encounters functioned as official or unofficial forms of dialogue versus a more fully formed interreligious alignment can offer greater understanding of the timeline associated with American evangelical support for Israel.

Daniel Hummel's impressive research and detailed biographical accounts of the leading figures in Jewish-evangelical relations make this book an engaging read. *Covenant Brothers* compellingly makes the case for the inclusion of Christian Zionism in scholarly discussions of both U.S.-Israel relations and Jewish-evangelical interreligious alliances.

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**David E. Lowe, *Touched with Fire: Morris B. Abram and the Battle against Racial and Religious Discrimination* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), 287 pp.**

The resume of activist attorney Morris B. Abram (1918–2000) abounded with success. A Rhodes Scholar from Georgia, he helped in the postwar prosecution of Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg. After returning to his native state, he spearheaded the legal battle against the electoral weight that the Georgia constitution granted to rural (and thus more conservative) voters. He took on white supremacy and became an ally and a friend of Martin Luther King Jr. After moving to New York, Abram became the youngest president ever to head the American Jewish Committee. From there he moved to Massachusetts, where he became the second president of Brandeis University. Abram then moved back to New York and chaired the United Negro College Fund; and soon after, Ronald Reagan appointed him to serve as vice-chair of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. An advocate of international human rights, Abram added a final item to a stellar career when he cofounded UN Watch, an organization intended to check the relentless anti-Zionism of the United Nations. This watchdog group was based in Geneva, which is where he died.

As a reformist lawyer and a communal leader, Abram exemplified the American Jew as liberal. His high-profile career spanned the second half of the twentieth century, when liberalism itself was subjected to the pressures of dramatic redefinition. It was his fate to experience—and then to seem to repudiate—that historic reorientation.

Abram told much of this story himself, in *The Day is Short* (1982), written in the shadow of acute myelocytic leukemia (which he overcame); and the extensive interviews that Eli N. Evans conducted with him amplify that sprightly autobiography. They were excerpted in *American Jewish History* in 1983. Abram's papers are deposited at Emory University; and David E. Lowe, a Savannah-born independent scholar, has drawn heavily upon such sources. He has also interviewed many of Abram's relatives and associates, including Abraham Foxman, Vernon Jordan, Norman Podhoretz, and George Shultz. Lowe was an undergraduate at Brandeis in 1968 when he met then-President Abram, and later worked in the Civil Rights Division of the Anti-Defamation League. The task that Lowe has

assigned himself in *Touched with Fire* is to rescue Abram from an unmerited oblivion. The result is a succinct, sympathetic, and engaging work that suffers from neither off-putting adulation nor out-of-control detail. So balanced, judicious, and well-researched is Lowe's achievement that no subsequent biography of Abram will ever be needed. In 2019 *Touched with Fire* won the National Jewish Book Award in the Biography category.

Growing up during the Great Depression in the hamlet of Fitzgerald, Georgia, Abram found the life around him uncongenial. His Romanian-born father spoke with an accent and struggled to make a living in dry goods. Abram's American-born mother was the granddaughter of a rabbi, but he himself knew very little of Judaism. He was intellectually driven as well as sensitive to the daily cruelties of Jim Crow, so escape from Fitzgerald was mandatory. With an undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia and a law degree from the University of Chicago, topped with the cachet of study at Oxford University, Abram started his career in private practice in Atlanta, where, shaped by his liberalism, he inevitably saw racial injustice as the most urgent of social problems. But the county-unit system gave the most backward parts of Georgia—and its most rabidly racist politicians—undue influence. (*Touched with Fire* is very good at explaining how elections were weighted against cities and against blacks.) Before the hopes of beleaguered black citizens could be energized, the state's peculiar voting arrangements had to be effectively challenged.

It took Abram close to fourteen years before the county-unit system was smashed in *Gray v. Sanders* (1963), in which a majority of the U.S. Supreme Court justices disregarded their colleague Felix Frankfurter's warning against intervention in the "political thicket." Instead they agreed with Abram that the Fourteenth Amendment and its majestic promise of "the equal protection of the laws" could not be logically squared with how Georgians picked their state legislators. Abram's winning argument got an assist from Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, making his first appearance before the Supreme Court. Had Abram done nothing else in his professional life, he deserves credit for bringing the democratic ideal of popular sovereignty—that is, "one person, one vote"—somewhat closer to realization. Sadly, that principle, which was novel in 1963, defies easy application. The Constitution requires that each state—no matter how small or large—is given exactly two representatives in the



U.S. Senate (Article I), and that presidents are selected by the Electoral College (Article II, plus the Twelfth Amendment) rather than awarded the largest number of popular votes. Thus, the principle of equal participation in the suffrage is systematically elusive. Martin Luther King Sr. nevertheless praised Abram in 1983 for having been “in the forefront of the public battle against racial discrimination” from virtually the moment “he arrived in Atlanta in 1948.” No Southern white, “Daddy” King added, could invoke “a longer experience in support of civil rights” (184).

The fight that made Abram’s legal career so honorable became his nemesis, however, when he became a university president in 1968. How the definition of progressivism shifted in the course of the 1960s became evident in January 1969, when black students at Brandeis occupied a building, renamed it for the late Malcolm X, and demanded that both undergraduate admissions and faculty hiring take racial identity fully into account. The formal enlargement of opportunity ceased to constitute a universalist principle that liberalism sought to champion, in the name of the ethos of individual merit. The historical mission of liberalism had been the elimination of the barriers of bigotry (rooted in irrationality) and privilege (rooted in ancestry), so that anyone’s aspiration could be cultivated and so that talent could be rewarded. No wonder that such a project attracted so many Jews. They assumed that the extinction of religious and racial prejudice would ensure the fair and widespread distribution of educational achievement and economic welfare. But that agenda proved glacially slow for vast numbers of black Americans, whose frustration and disenchantment inspired collective demands that race should matter. Commonly translated into a policy of affirmative action, which Abram feared could readily be perverted into quotas, the ideology of “Malcolm X University” collided directly with the rationale for the birth of Brandeis University itself. As its president, and for the rest of his life, he condemned affirmative action as “an ethnic spoils system, [which] once introduced, is bound to become entrenched and requires a suspension of the Fourteenth Amendment” (180).

Though Abram won a tactical victory over the black militants in January 1969, in this instance he lost the effort to maintain the values that had activated his public life. He served only seventeen months in the Brandeis presidency; no one’s tenure in that job, other than interim officeholders, would ever be shorter. It was the first significant setback in Abram’s career;

and the memory of that failure “troubled him for the rest of his life,” according to Lowe (7). Though he continued to claim fidelity to liberalism as it was understood earlier, the emergence of black militancy drove Abram to the right. Nor was he alone in coming to see the Democratic Party, which generally favored the implementation of affirmative action, as hostile to the interests of an American Jewry that recalled the adverse effects of an earlier version of “racial” preferences. Jimmy Carter, in 1976, became the last Democrat for whom Abram would ever vote in a presidential race. Four years later, he voted for Reagan and denounced his fellow Georgian as “feckless” and “hopeless” (174). When Reagan picked Abram to serve on the Commission on Civil Rights, among the opponents of the nomination was Andrew Young, who had been one of King’s key lieutenants.

Abram of course insisted that not he but liberalism had changed, a broader trajectory that Lowe does not fully address. But Abram did transform himself into a Jewish communal leader in ways that would have been unpredictable in the small-town South of his origins. He chaired the National Conference on Soviet Jewry from 1983 until 1988 and from 1986 until 1989 also chaired the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. For someone who had never even become a bar mitzvah, such an ascent was remarkable, a tribute to political and diplomatic skills that were almost entirely independent of any special knowledge of Jewish history and culture. Though nurtured in his boyhood in an atmosphere of anti-Zionism, Abram made UN Watch pivotal to the monitoring of the persistent anti-Israel attacks that characterized the oratory at the United Nations. In seeking to promote Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union and in defending the security of the State of Israel against its detractors, Morris Abram sought to reconcile such distinctive communal commitments with the advocacy of the individual rights that were once deemed central to American liberalism. This potential tension between these programmatic aims makes his career paradigmatic and endows *Touched with Fire* with genuine value.

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**Sean Martin and John J. Grabowski, eds. *Cleveland Jews and the Making of a Midwestern Community* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2020), 254 pp.**

The writing of American Jewish community histories has gone through four stages of development. In its initial phase, back in the bad old days of ancestor-worship work, deadly tomes consisted primarily of the listing of the names of hundreds of Jews—almost all men—who built and maintained local areas. Rabbis often penned these accounts and were sure to give themselves much credit for community achievements.

The professionalization of the field took an important step forward during a second era in the early 1960s, when a fine historian, Professor Lloyd Gartner, with the encouragement of the distinguished Americanist Allan Nevins, co-authored worthy histories of Milwaukee and Los Angeles. In one case, Gartner turned to a local rabbi for assistance, and in another, he worked with a hometown rabbi who was also an academic. As late as 1978, Gartner found time—apart from his other literary pursuits—to compose a similar account of Cleveland Jewry. Though free of the self-congratulatory tone of earlier works, Gartner also focused on institution building, leadership activities, and conflicts among elites.

By that time, community histories had become even more sophisticated as a third period of development was underway. They were benefitting from the use of quantified data-like census materials, and local voices began to be heard and chronicled. Marc Lee Raphael's history of the Jews of Columbus, Ohio, and Steven Hertzberg's work on the Jews of Atlanta were standouts. And then, at the turn of the millennium, the combination of intriguing sources and sophisticated monographic articles about life among Boston and Brooklyn Jews led the way during this fourth, most recent stage, in making the field even more accessible to general and academic readers alike.

Cleveland Jews resembles these recent books, even if it lacks the charm of the Boston book, which adds a wonderful set of photographs to impeccable scholarship, and the panache of the Brooklyn book, which includes spicy memoirs among the erudite works of professional historians. Thus, though the Cleveland Federation arguably sponsored this anthology for its membership, in the end, it is more for

academicians than general readers. Indeed, its greatest strengths lie in its bringing together a fine array of specialists who write in their areas of expertise and who explicitly and correctly situate the local Jewish experience both within the contexts of national American Jewish and general Midwestern history.

Mary McCune's work, which links and contrasts national trends in feminism to the evolution of the Cleveland branch of the National Council of Jewish Women, is the most impressive contribution to this book. Significantly, she uses her article to urge scholars "to look away from the coasts like New York" (123) in contrasting how long-standing, local women's organizations reacted generation by generation to changes in social and political movements within and without their city. And then there is the delightful biographical sketch of Harvey Pekar, whose comic strip, featuring the less-than-super-hero persona "American Splendor," was drawn out "of the streets of Cleveland" (81) and published from 1976 to 2008. The sketch illuminates Pekar's and his hometown's complex Jewish immigrant and second-generation identities. Readers are also reminded at the outset of this article that two Cleveland Jews, beginning in 1938, were the originators of Superman, the true superhero.

My problem with this book is the limited chronological reach of some of the other contributions who do not extend their studies to the present. Indeed, of the ten pieces in this work, four end their discussions with the early 1960s. And one interesting biographical sketch, that of innovative Jewish educator Abraham Hayyim Friedman, finishes in 1939; understandably, I suppose, since he died that year.

Ira Robinson's richly documented investigation of Cleveland's Orthodox lives and leaders is also far from up to date. While this worthy article includes several important documents that give depth to our understanding of national religious trends within Orthodoxy, the study effectively ends in 1940. Only in the last paragraph does he hint at the impact the European-transplanted Telshe Yeshiva has made upon its observant Cleveland community and American Jewry generally over the past eighty years.

By the same token, David Hammack's paper on Jewish philanthropy concludes in 1990, with a generation and a half of developments and changes still to be studied. In fact, even within the period that he has

chosen to examine there is more material and analysis of the origins of Federation and other local charities from the turn of the twentieth century than even the period 1960 to 1990.

Perhaps most important—and disappointing—Todd Michney’s study of “Jewish-black relations in Cleveland” (142–161) ends in 1960. And while the questions surrounding “interactions and relations ... encompassing not only coexistence and cooperation but also fear, distrust and antagonism” (255) are, in fact, taken up in a different article on suburbanization, this article fails to elaborate on why tensions in the inner city were devoid of the violence that took place in other comparable places in America from the 1960s to today.

Ultimately, while this book advances the field and should be read and respected, work remains to be done to bring the history of this important center of Jewish life up to date.

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**Avinoam Patt, Atina Grossmann, Linda G. Levi, and Maud S. Mandel, eds., *The JDC at 100: A Century of Humanitarianism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2019), 501 pp., including index and photos.**

For over a century, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC, or in short, the JDC) has been carrying out its vital humanitarian work in continually changing political, economic, and social situations throughout the Jewish world, priding itself on non-partisan and legal (or quasi-legal) activities. Created in 1914 for the “Relief of Jewish War Sufferers” in Eastern Europe and Palestine, the JDC was formed out of a broad coalition of American Jewish organizations, large and small, with varying religious and ideological orientations. Although it was envisioned originally as a temporary committee to aid Jews through the crises that arose during and after World War I, by the post–World War II decade the JDC had become a permanent global organization for American Jewish aid abroad in all areas of health, education, welfare,

and often emigration and resettlement. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of Jewish life over the last century without the JDC, or the “Joint,” as it is known outside the United States. The humanitarian activities of the JDC are mentioned in countless studies on various aspects of world Jewry since World War I: European Jews, the Jewish *Yishuv* in Palestine and later the State of Israel, North African and Middle Eastern Jewish communities, Jewish migrations, the Holocaust, American Jewish communal work, and more. Since its inception, the JDC has commissioned many surveys documenting its activities, and numerous staff members have authored memoirs; however, until now, few scholarly publications have focused on the JDC itself, spotlighting its challenges and the complexities of its work. Fifty years after its formation, the pioneering American historian of migration, Oscar Handlin, wrote *A Continuing Task: The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1914–1964* (New York: Random House, 1964). Not long after, in the 1970s, the renowned Israeli historian and scholar of the Holocaust, Yehuda Bauer, made a serious contribution to the field, resulting in two groundbreaking volumes on the history of the JDC,<sup>1</sup> as well as other books that relate to JDC activities in Europe. All of these are essential for any study of the JDC; however, by virtue of their comprehensive goal, presenting an overview of JDC policies and activities, they cannot be expected to delve into the complexities of JDC work in each locale and situation.

*The JDC at 100* not only represents an enormous step toward rectifying this lacuna, it also opens the field for more research. This engaging volume is the result of a scholars’ workshop held in New York in 2014 on the occasion of the JDC centennial. The editors’ thematic introduction is followed by thirteen original essays, each focusing on a specific time and place. The majority of the contributors are from Western, Central, and Eastern European countries, and augment their findings from the JDC archives with local Jewish and government sources of their countries. Many of the articles are the result of recent doctoral theses, thus bringing exciting new work to our attention.

The articles are more or less chronologically ordered, from the aftermath of World War I in the early 1920s until 1990. Some of them span a few years, others decades. Seven articles examine activities in Central and Eastern European countries after the Russian Revolution, during

communist rule. The first is a fascinating study by Rakefet Zalashik, which follows the cooperation and collaboration of the JDC with the OZE, the Russian-based Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jews, and the TOZ, its sister organization in Poland. These efforts focused on issues of health and hygiene in the war-ravished countries in the 1920s, particularly after the OZE (later becoming the OSE, headquartered in Berlin) was banned by the Soviet authorities in 1921. Zalashik, as well as other contributors, examines not only the organizational activities, but the tensions between “center” and “periphery”—that is, between the JDC headquarters in New York and its American donors, with their uniform policies and budget requirements, and the Eastern European organizational beneficiaries, with their own priorities. These interactions intensified the already existing “East/West” relationships (28). Much of the success or failure of the work—the cooperation or clashes—depended on the abilities and sensitivities of the JDC workers in the field to negotiate between the two sides and build interpersonal relationships.

The theme “Parameters and Predicaments,” the subtitle of Elissa Bemporad’s article on the JDC in Minsk in the interwar years, is also characteristic of Jaclyn Granick’s essay on the JDC and relief in the Ukraine, 1920–1923, and Mikhail Mitsel’s chapter on JDC programs in the USSR, 1941–1948. These essays examine the complex and often frustrating work of the JDC under the communist regime in the Soviet Union. The JDC was often required to undertake “nonsectarian” work, compromising its aid to Jews while assisting non-Jews in order to gain permission to operate in the region. Although technically the JDC only undertook work which was officially sanctioned, in actuality it also carried out quasi-legal and semi-clandestine activities.

Six chapters examine the routes and processes of emigration of Jewish survivors/refugees/emigrants from Eastern Europe and their settlement options, both temporary and permanent. Two are especially noteworthy: Marion Kaplan’s work on the little-known resettlement plans in the Dominican Republic, “DORSA and the Jewish Refugee Settlement in Sosúa, 1940–1945,” and Zhava Litvac Glaser’s “Laura Margolis and JDC Efforts in Cuba and Shanghai,” which chronicles Margolis and the amazing work she accomplished. These chapters highlight negotiations between the JDC, local authorities, and Jewish communities during wartime, again

emphasizing both the tensions between policy and action and the critical importance of the personality of the JDC director in the field.

Many of the articles are primarily descriptive—uncovering forgotten or unknown chapters in the history of the JDC and highlighting local events and global politics that affected regional JDC staff and activities. The contributors each focus on specific aspects of the complex interplay between standardized JDC policy emanating from New York and its nuanced implementation by dedicated staff workers in the field; negotiations with local authorities and changing government regulations; and the needs of the various groups of Jewish refugees. All, of course, impacted profoundly on the lives of the Jews who were assisted, but based on JDC documentation, little recognition is given to the agency of these “clients”. Of particular note are those articles presenting a more critical analysis of events within a larger historical or theoretical context. Laura Hobson Faure and Veerle Vanden Daelen’s article, “Imported from the United States? The Centralization of Private Jewish Welfare after the Holocaust,” examines the agency of Holocaust survivors and local initiatives vis-à-vis the “American imperialism” of JDC officials in post-war Belgium and France—a situation that created “tensions and challenges as multiple ideas and convictions clashed” (280). In Belgium the JDC was forced to retreat from its policy of recognizing a centralized, country-wide administration in favor of semi-autonomous activities in Brussels and Antwerp; in France, ironically, countrywide centralization was achieved not as a consequence of JDC policy, but as a united force opposing JDC authority.

One of the most riveting articles, Inga Veksler’s “JDC and Soviet Jews in Austria and Italy,” presents an analysis of events between 1971 and 1990, which many of today’s readers can recall. She makes extensive use of interviews and memoirs, in addition to archival resources, focusing on the Russian emigrants and their perceptions of JDC assistance. In what was “the organization’s biggest, most costly, and most controversial transit migrant group since the postwar migration” of displaced persons (439), clashes flared up between the emigrants/recipients and the JDC donors and staff workers due to differing and misunderstood cultural norms and standardized American JDC policy. Through this case study, Veksler emphasizes the “experiential as well as structural continuity” (441) of refugee/migrant



groups in a broader context, focusing as much on the emigrants' anxiety and emotional limbo, as on the challenges of their geographic transit.

The essays in this volume are readable and well written. Moreover, they include extensive and meticulous endnotes, referencing archival resources and scholarly works, which pave the way for further work. The reader is drawn to reflect upon the similarities in issues presented in various studies. For example, from the chapter by Avinoam Patt and Kierra Crago-Schneider that examines JDC work and the motivations of individual Jews remaining in or returning to postwar Germany, 1947–1957, one can certainly draw comparisons with Kinga Frojimovics's chapter on those returning to Hungary during the same general time period.

The JDC has left an invaluable inheritance for scholars and those interested in family histories. One rich source is its trove of widely disseminated newsletters, booklets, advertisements, and films publicizing its work primarily aimed at its indispensable donors. Its extensive archive of internal reports, conference proceedings, and correspondence, is essential for understanding the mechanisms of JDC's work and how its New York leadership and field workers perceived it. The digitization of the vast JDC archives during the last decade has made this treasure chest of materials readily accessible online for scholars and all interested in the study of Jewish communities world-wide during the past century.

Although these diverse essays were first presented as papers at a JDC conference and based primarily on the JDC archives, I would like to see the research broadened, with critical analyses of the archival documents, augmented by discussions of positions beyond those reflected in the organization's records, as those recorded in communal and governmental records, personal memoirs, oral documentation, and visual materials. The results will no doubt lead to a better understanding not only of JDC's vital role in the Jewish world, but of Jewish history during the past century in general.

Finally, the title of the book, *The JDC at 100: A Century of Humanitarianism*, is a bit misleading, as the editors indeed acknowledge: "Given its origins in a first-time gathering of scholars devoted to the history of the JDC, it offers only a partial geographical and chronological view of JDC's activities" (1). Even so, it is rather surprising that there are no articles focusing on the activities and policies of the JDC in its formative years

during World War I in Eastern Europe and Palestine, nor on pre-State Israel and the subsequent decades after its independence, nor on the far-reaching work of the JDC in Islamic countries since World War II. Furthermore, totally absent are studies on the JDC within the context of American Jewry and the development of American Jewish organizations, especially in relation to the United Jewish Appeal, which is its major channel for funding.

These comments notwithstanding, as well as the difficulties of reviewing a diverse collection of essays, this volume is of great value for scholars working on a wide variety of projects: on specific topics and communities in which the JDC was involved; comparative studies on the challenges confronting Jews in modern times; the problems facing refugees and emigrants; and the work of global aid organizations. Individuals interested in family histories that intersect with events described in this volume will find the relevant articles extremely useful, providing the necessary context for their own stories, as well as ample sources to continue their search.

I join the scholars who contributed to this notable volume in calling for further research, not only uncovering important chapters of the global history of the JDC, but also, and perhaps more important, analyzing its policies and the complex work in larger theoretical and historical contexts, and giving agency to the wide range of actors on the international stage.

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1 Yehuda Bauer, *My Brother's Keeper: A History of the American Joint Distribution Committee, 1929–1939* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1974); *Ibid.*, *American Jewry and the Holocaust: The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1939–1945* (Jerusalem: Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University, 1981).

**Mark A. Raider, *The Essential Hayim Greenberg: Essays and Addresses On Jewish Culture, Socialism & Zionism* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2016), 572 pp.**

The time is approaching when the ... essential aims of the Zionist movement ... will have to state in clear terms its aspirations and demands.... There is ... more than one reason to assume that from the viewpoint of strategy it is not desirable the we should occupy for any length of time a position of passive waiting, no matter how watchful, and let others try and decipher our aims or to translate them into definite political terms. (273)

Mark A. Raider's work on the American Jewish experience, modern Jewish history, Zionism, and Israel are well known among scholars from across disciplines as meaningful contributions to multiples areas of study. It is no surprise, then, that Raider has done it again with his most recent book on the selected works of Hayim Greenberg. Greenberg's essays and addresses are nothing short of a treasure trove of modern and contemporary Jewish thought, and Raider's translation, organization, and contextualization make Greenberg and his considerable corpus available to English language readers like never before.

Greenberg was a central figure in early- to mid-twentieth-century Jewish cultural and political discourse, a man known and beloved by David Ben-Gurion, who considered him a "man of the rarest quality" (2). Greenberg's *New York Times* obituary called him a "leading personage" of the Zionist movement, and the Jewish Telegraphic Agency considered him "a leading philosopher of labor Zionism" (2). And yet today, as Raider notes, Greenberg, who enjoyed international renown as a remarkable public intellectual, "has all but vanished from Jewish public consciousness" (2). Why, we might well ask, has he "slipped down the proverbial memory hole?" (2) Raider's introduction provides readers with answers that shed light on the profound changes Western Jews have experienced since the end of World War II. Reasons include the major evolution in image and status of American Jewry since the 1950s, and Israel's radical shift away from Greenberg's Labor-oriented worldview that once shaped its political discourse. Yet Greenberg's vision of the Israel–Diaspora as passionately symbiotic, and his accompanying reluctance to engage in lockstep ideologies, make his work especially

rewarding; he represents a political path not taken and a transnational and multilingual relationship with Jewishness that has disappeared from much of Western Jewry.

Greenberg may not be in vogue at the moment, but his obvious faith in humanity, and his fierce proclamations that gifts such as democracy and freedoms of speech and thought are nonnegotiable, are powerful and worth (re)visiting. Scholars and students of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Western political and nationalist thought will find this book intriguing; as a scholar of early Zionism, Greenberg's work makes me feel a kind of nostalgia and longing for a time when so many paths seemed possible. Perhaps the lesson of Greenberg's work is that much is *still* possible, even when we are led to believe it is not.

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**Deborah Hart Strober and Gerald S. Strober, *Confronting Hate: The Untold Story of the Rabbi Who Stood Up for Human Rights, Racial Justice, and Religious Reconciliation* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2019), 416 pp.**

*Confronting Hate*, by Deborah Hart Strober and Gerald Strober, details the exceptional life story of Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum. Chapter by chapter, this fascinating narrative about Tanenbaum unfolds in an engaging and accurate manner. It is excellently written and could easily serve as a template for action to help resolve the problems of antisemitism and racial injustice that we see on an almost daily basis.

Born in Baltimore in 1925, Marc, who initially went by his first name Herman, quickly was recognized for his academic abilities and concern for social issues. After graduation from Yeshiva College, he was accepted

into rabbinical school at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Even during his seminary days, his literary talents were apparent. One of his many jobs included being a scriptwriter for the seminary's highly acclaimed program, "The Eternal Light," and he was hired as the *Jewish Post's* bureau chief and to do public relations for the seminary and other major Jewish organizations—all while still a student.

After ordination, Tanenbaum began a short stint in the congregational rabbinate. He soon returned to institutional work as the public relations director of the Synagogue Council of America, an organization devoted to promoting cooperation among Judaism faith movements. By 1954, he became that agency's youngest professional leader. In this role, he honed his abilities in public relations, speech writing, and institutional relations.

It was a hectic time in Tanenbaum's life. In addition to his leadership at the Synagogue Council, he was running his own public relations company and consulting with another. In the midst of this unbelievable schedule, in May of 1955, he somehow found time to get married to Helga Weiss, with whom he would have three children. During his seven-year tenure at the Synagogue Council, Tanenbaum was involved in innovative initiatives covering interfaith relations, racial prejudice, and international concerns.

As a result of his pioneering work, he was offered the prestigious position of director of Interreligious Affairs at the American Jewish Committee (AJC). In this role, Tanenbaum became involved in a project known as the Second Vatican Council. In the late 1950s, the Catholic Church was beginning to reconsider its attitudes toward Jews and Judaism, especially in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Tanenbaum initiated contact with clerics at the Vatican and with Popes Pius XII and John XXIII. The topic being discussed had persisted for two millennia: Jews being held responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. To assist with his work in the Vatican, Tanenbaum consulted with luminaries from the Jewish community, including Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, Dr. Louis Finkelstein, Dr. Salo Baron, and the chief rabbis of Rome and France. Other Jewish leaders, such as Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, felt that any changes the Catholic Church made in its liturgy or teachings were internal church matters.

These meetings and conferences were of the utmost importance. The Catholic Church was going to address theological beliefs that had generated antisemitic beliefs over the centuries. In June of 1963 the pope died, and a new leader, Paul VI, took over. It is hard to imagine the many levels to these conversations. Arab countries developed opposition toward this initiative, as did some Jewish and Catholic groups. The possibility that the effort could be delayed or derailed altogether was strong. It would take a master at public relations and a dedicated cleric to move the whole process forward. Marc Tanenbaum was that person.

In October of 1965, the Church issued its “Nostra Aetate” (“In Our Time”) declaration. Tanenbaum made two telling comments about this document. The first comment spoke to the historic and exceptional nature of the declaration: “For the first time in the history of the twenty-one Ecumenical Councils, the highest ecclesiastical authorities have committed the Catholic Church throughout the world to uprooting the charge of collective guilt against the Jews, eliminating anti-Semitism and fostering mutual knowledge and respect between Catholics and Jews.” The second comment made clear that he understood that two thousand years of prejudice would not be magically or immediately dissolved: “The antagonism of centuries will not be swept away overnight. For people of good will on both sides, decades of massive work would lie ahead.”

Among the many spiritual leaders Tanenbaum met and developed a relationship with was the Reverend Billy Graham. Tanenbaum worked with Graham to support Israel on the highest political levels. This connection developed to the extent that in 1982 Tanenbaum called him “the greatest friend of the Jewish people in the entire Christian community in the 20th century.” Yet in a March 2002 article in the *Chicago Tribune*, based on a White House tape, it appears that both Richard Nixon and Graham spoke about the Jewish community in highly prejudicial and stereotypical terms.

Tanenbaum was involved in other major areas of social, political, and religious reform. In the arena of race relations, he served as the president of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organizations, developing stronger ties between the Black and Jewish communities. Tanenbaum was deeply involved in helping Jews from the Soviet Union leave that country for a new life in Israel or the United States. As the

representative of the AJC, he worked with European clerics to help modernize and modify the Oberammergau Passion Play, which had generated antisemitism for centuries.

Tanenbaum's activism on behalf of the oppressed led him to travel to Southeast Asia with Elie Wiesel, actress Liv Ullmann, and other leaders to work to alleviate the enormous stress of the so-called Boat People, who had become refugees from that region. In December of 1979, he testified before Congress about his work and impressions of the situation in Asia. "How many Nazi Holocausts, how many Cambodian genocides can the world endure and regard itself as worthwhile to continue?"

In the midst of maintaining this hectic professional schedule, Tanenbaum's marriage was imploding. In the late 1970s he and Helga divorced. He was later introduced to Dr. Georgette Bennett, who was from a family of Holocaust survivors. After a romance of a few years, they were wed in June of 1982. In 1983, after two decades as the AJC director of Interreligious Affairs, Tanenbaum became the head of the AJC's International Affairs Office. In this role, he traveled around the world pursuing various interests. He announced his retirement from the AJC to take place in October 1990, on his 65th birthday.

Life had one more major surprise for the Tanenbaums: a baby. In December of 1991 they found out that Georgette, through the blessings of modern medicine, was pregnant. Sadly, at the same time, Tanenbaum's heart was failing. He passed away on 3 July 1992. Tributes to this larger-than-life spiritual leader came from across the country and world. In his memory, Georgette, with the support of like-minded people, formed the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding. Two months after his passing, his son, Joshua-Marc, was born.

Of all the accolades Tanenbaum received, one in particular, which Georgette accepted on his behalf, aptly summarized his contributions to Judaism, Christianity, and the world. Presented by the New York Board of Rabbis, it had as its Hebrew title, "Navi Lagoyim," "Prophet to the Nations (Gentiles)." This designation is first recorded in the Book of Jeremiah, with God describing Jeremiah in that manner. "Prophet to the world" seems likewise an appropriate description for this rabbi who accomplished so much. It is hoped that future generations will study his life and be inspired by his actions.

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**Cora Wilburn, *Cosella Wayne: Or, Will and Destiny*, edited and introduced by Jonathan D. Sarna (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2019), xl + 294 pp.**

This fascinating volume by the little-known American Jewish writer Cora Wilburn offers new insight about Jewish women authors during the nineteenth century. Serialized literature, as much of this volume is, can seem slow when compiled into a single unit, and, moreover, nineteenth-century literary sensibilities can seem florid when compared to those of the twenty-first. Fortunately, Jonathan Sarna provides a penetrating analysis to help readers appreciate the significance and the literary strength of Wilburn's work.

Nineteenth-century American women enthusiastically embraced print culture. By the 1820s, literature designed by and for them included advice manuals compiled by mothers' associations and, soon, books offering advice on domestic labor. By midcentury, illustrated magazines offered women household advice, serialized fiction and short stories, dress patterns, recipes, needlepoint and embroidery instruction, and more. The quiet, secluded work of writing was customarily considered suitable for decent women, and as the opportunities for publication expanded, more women produced literature. Nathaniel Hawthorne's famous complaint about the "hordes of scribbling women" testified to the popularity of the work.

Jewish women joined the trend. Actress and poet Adah Isaacs Menken (1835–1868), for example, published her book of poetry, *Infelicia* (1868), which lauded Judaism and disparaged the male domination that ruined women's lives. More famously, Emma Lazarus (1849–1887) penned sonnets, prose, and translations that reached a broad audience and earned high praise and a place on the base of the Statue of Liberty.



*The American Israelite* (1854–) of that era provided column space for poets such as Annette Kohn. Jewish monthly magazine the *Occident and American Jewish Advocate* (1843–1869) included poetry and short stories by British author Grace Aguilar, sisters Marion and Celia Hartog, Rebecca Hyneman, and others. Aguilar also published the influential volume *The Spirit of Judaism* (1842), along with *The Perez Family* (1847) and the *Vale of Cedars* (1850), each of which were distributed in both the United States and England.

But, as Sarna points out, Cora Wilburn's *Cosella Wayne* (1860) is the first "novel written and published in English by an American Jewish woman writer and the first coming-of-age novel to depict Jews in the United States." It had remained hidden from researchers because it appeared serialized in the Spiritualist magazine *Banner of Light* rather than in a Jewish periodical. Location is everything in archival research as much as in real estate, and Wilburn's work was placed to be forgotten. The diary, which corroborates Sarna's thesis that *Cosella Wayne* is semi-autobiographical, was located within the minutes of Boston's Beth El Synagogue (housed in the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati) and noted in a brief thank-you letter to Jacob Rader Marcus. The 1917 *Standard Book of Jewish Verse* included only three of Wilburn's poems. It is a great testament to Sarna's ability to comb archival collections that he found her work. Moreover, no living relative of Wilburn's argued for her importance.

Given all of that—florid prose, an obscure publication vehicle, only three poems reprinted more than a century ago—modern readers might wonder why Sarna's volume is significant. But it is. First, Wilburn's work includes descriptions of Jewish life in many parts of the globe that seldom appear in American Jewish literature. Probably born in Alsace, Wilburn's early years took her to London, Burma, Oman, Iran, and probably Curacao before she came to the United States and settled for a time in Philadelphia, then Boston, and finally Maine. In *Cosella Wayne*, for example, she describes a Passover celebration in an "oriental" home (Persia or Turkey?), the relations between its family's generations, spouses, and servants according to their clothing, food, and manner, and follows it with an equally richly described betrothal ceremony three months later. She describes Philadelphia's Jews from the perspective of a

penniless woman seeking assistance from smug charitable women. Much of nineteenth-century women's literature explores issues of confinement and escape (as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar explained several decades ago), but Wilburn's heroine traverses the world.

Second, as Sarna explains, many of the issues addressed in this novel resonate with twenty-first-century readers. How do I understand my true identity? How do I deal with antisemitism? What is spirituality, and how do I live a spiritual life? In what way can a woman defend herself against sexism and male aggression, even if that comes from a parent? What place can Judaism have in my life, what is its core meaning, and how can its rituals enrich my life? What makes a house a home?

Wilburn's novel addresses those issues because they were the issues that she cared most about in her personal life. Born Henrietta Pulfermacher (Powdermaker), her father was a dishonest and violent man who dragged his wife and daughter around the world with him as he defrauded various people and then escaped the law. Her own interest in the Spiritualist movement, which was very popular in the years before and during the Civil War, provided her with solace and a community, but she never fully rejected Judaism. On the contrary, though she at one point converted to Catholicism, she strived to resolve her religious conflicts and confusions through a Spiritualism that seemed to encompass both Judaism and the bit of Catholicism she appreciated (though it never seemed to include the Trinity).

Readers can find much to reward their effort in this volume. The human search for meaning, solace, and a place in the world is not confined to any particular century.

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