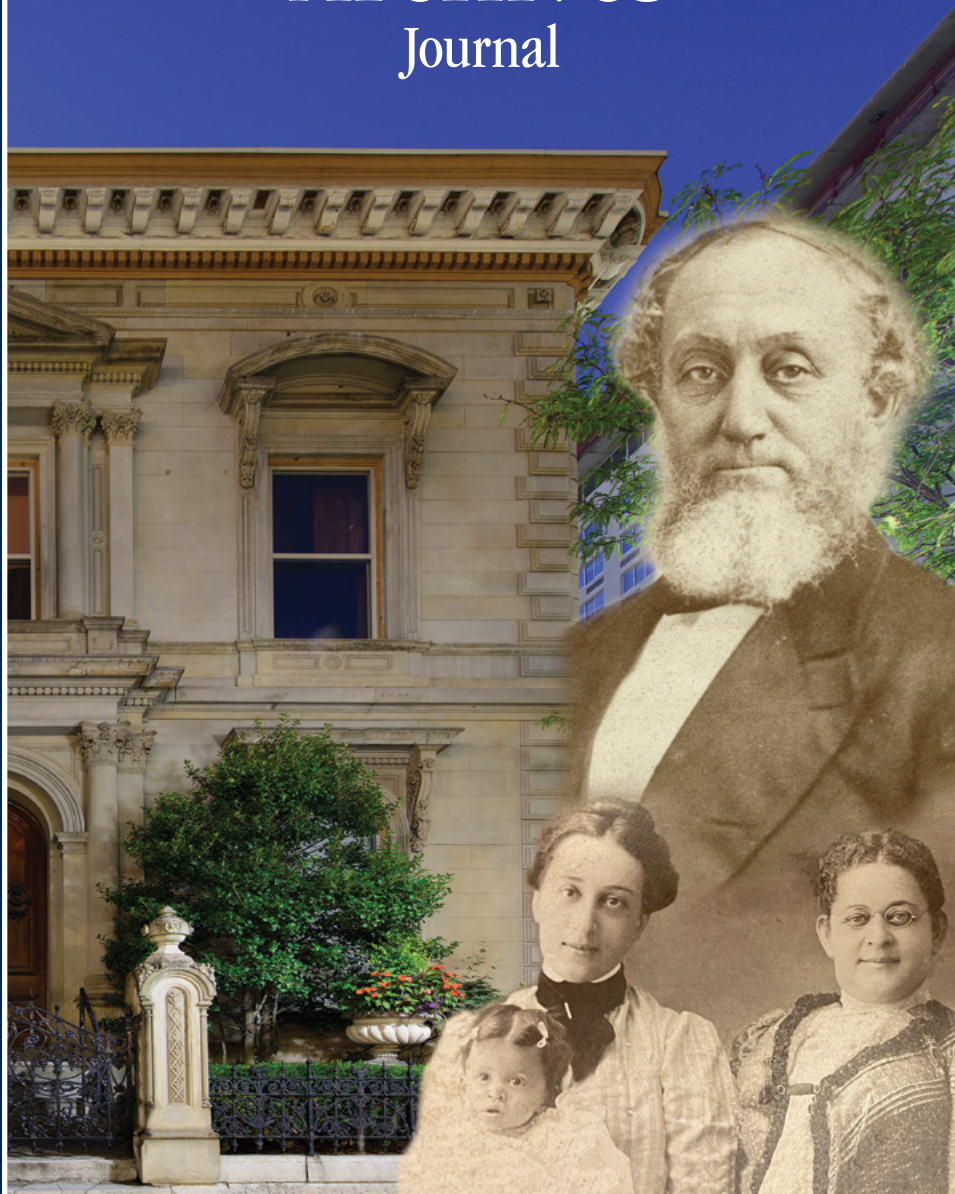


The
American Jewish
Archives
Journal



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The
American Jewish
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Journal

*A Journal Devoted to the Preservation and Study
of the American Jewish Experience*

Gary P. Zola, Ph.D., Editor
Dana Herman, Ph.D., Managing Editor
Jacob Rader Marcus, Ph.D., Founding Editor (1896–1995)

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On the cover:

Historic Fechheimer collage featuring Marcus Fechheimer (1818–1881),
Mary Holstein Fechheimer (1849–1931) and Cora Fechheimer (1872–1953).
The former Fechheimer mansion still stands at 22 Garfield Place in downtown
Cincinnati. (Courtesy J Miles Wolf Photography, jmileswolf.com)

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NEW PERSPECTIVES IN **American** **Jewish** HISTORY

a documentary tribute to
Jonathan D. Sarna

edited by
Mark A. Raider and Gary Phillip Zola

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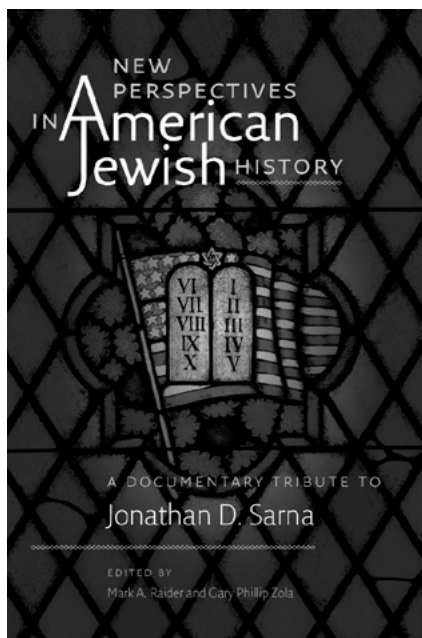
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Gary Phillip Zola is the executive director of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives and the Edward M. Ackerman Family Distinguished Professor of the American Jewish Experience and Reform Jewish History at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio. **Mark A. Raider** is professor of modern Jewish history in the Department of History and director of the Center for Studies in Jewish Education and Culture at the University of Cincinnati.

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TO OUR READERS . . .

This year marks the bicentennial anniversary of Jewish communal life in Cincinnati (1821–2021). Like many other American Jewish communities, Jewish communal life in Cincinnati began with the establishment of a cemetery—in this case the Chestnut Street Cemetery, the oldest Jewish burial ground west of the Alleghenies. The fact that Cincinnati’s Jewish community is two hundred years old, however, does not vouchsafe historical significance. To be sure, several Jewish communities are as old or even older than Cincinnati, but few have played such a prominent role in shaping the history of American Judaism and, by extension, the American nation.

One of Jonathan D. Sarna’s essays on the history of Jewish life in Cincinnati colorfully demonstrates that by the end of the nineteenth century the Jewish community of the Queen City was held in the highest regard by Jews and non-Jews alike:

Ohio’s “wandering historian,” Henry Howe (1816–1893), called [Cincinnati] “a sort of paradise for the Hebrews. According to a Chicago newspaper, the *Jewish Advocate*, “No other Jewish community accomplished so much good in the interest of Judaism and its people.” Others termed it the “center of Jewish American life,” and “the pioneer [Jewish] city of the world.” According to Isidor Wise, son of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, many of its Jewish children, even if scattered across the frontier, vowed to remember [Cincinnati] eternally: “If ever I forget thee . . . may my right hand be withered.”¹

One crucial factor contributing to the city’s notoriety during the nineteenth century came from its meteoric rise in population. Between 1830 and 1850, Cincinnati’s population grew faster than any other American city. Cincinnati had become the sixth-largest urban center in the United States even before the Civil War began. Commerce and

1 Jonathan D. Sarna, “‘A Sort of Paradise for the Hebrews’: The Lofty Vision of Cincinnati Jews” in *Ethnic Diversity and Civic Identity: Patterns of Conflict and Cohesion in Cincinnati since 1820*, ed. Henry D. Shapiro and Jonathan D. Sarna (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 131.

enterprise fueled the city's spectacular growth. Its location on the banks of the Ohio River, which flowed from western Pennsylvania and served five Midwestern states before emptying into the Mississippi, made Cincinnati one of America's major transportation corridors for another eight Midwestern and Southern states—stretching from Minnesota in the North to Louisiana and the port of New Orleans in the South.²

Central European immigrants, many of whom came from the German states, contributed to Cincinnati's population boom during the antebellum period, and a significant number of those immigrants were Jews. As one historian reflected, the Jews who settled in the Midwest "were the same hardy pioneers . . . who trekked along with others to open up the country, ever westward bound." From the mid-1850s through the early 1870s, Cincinnati possessed the second- or third-largest Jewish community per capita in the United States; it also happened to be one of the wealthiest Jewish communities in the country.³

Yet the winds of change that transformed Cincinnati into a major American metropolis began to dissipate in the 1870s. City leadership expressed concern when Chicago's population overtook Cincinnati's. Before long, St. Louis had also grown larger than the Queen City. Government officials tried to stave off the inevitable by annexing adjacent suburban counties in the hope of retaining Cincinnati's status as a major American city. Movers and shakers also tried to reposition it as a growing industrial and manufacturing center. But despite efforts to spur demographic growth, the antebellum boom that had made Cincinnati one of America's most prominent cities in the nineteenth century had come to an end by the *fin de siècle*.⁴

2 Robert A. Genheimer, "Archaeology at Covington, Kentucky: A Particularly 'Northern-Looking' Southern City" in *Archaeology of Southern Urban Landscapes*, ed. Amy L. Young (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2000), 69.

3 For quote, see Emanuel Hertz, *Abraham Lincoln: A New Portrait*, 2 vols. (New York: Horace Liveright, Inc., 1931), 338. For Jewish demographic data during the 19th century, see Jacob Rader Marcus, *To Count a People: American Jewish Population Data, 1585–1984* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990). After the Civil War, Cincinnati and San Francisco vied for distinction of following New York as having America's second most populous Jewish community.

4 Tim Burke, "The New City: The Evolution of Cincinnati from the 1880's to the 1930's,"

Ironically, it was at this very time that Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise (1819–1900) was finally able to fulfill his lifelong dream of establishing a rabbinical and theological seminary for American Jews in Cincinnati—something he had advocated for nearly three decades but which had never taken root. In 1855 he founded the Zion Collegiate Association, headquartered in Cincinnati with chapters in other communities. This loose association founded Zion College in Cincinnati, but the venture survived less than two years. In the late 1860s, two additional attempts to launch an American seminary took place with no greater success. Temple Emanu-El of New York City established a “Theological Seminary,” and Wise’s oftentimes rabbinical adversary, Isaac Leeser (1806–1868), founded Maimonides College in Philadelphia. Both schools disbanded before their students could complete a bona fide rabbinical curriculum.⁵

It was in 1873, however, when a man named Henry Adler (1808–1892) stepped forward and gave new financial impetus to Wise’s long-held educational ambitions. Adler, a retired professional who belonged to Cincinnati’s Adath Israel Congregation, offered Wise a \$10,000 donation—equal to almost \$2 million dollars in today’s money. Adler gave Wise two years to organize a Jewish congregational union that would agree to establish, support, and sustain a college of higher Jewish learning. If he succeeded, he could retain the donation, but otherwise the money would be returned to Adler’s family. In effect, Adler’s contribution was a “challenge grant” that enabled Wise, together with the energetic president of his congregation, Moritz Loth (1832–1913), to organize the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), the world’s oldest continuously existing congregational union. Two years later, in October of 1875, the Hebrew Union College (HUC) opened its doors in Cincinnati, Ohio.⁶

<https://www.cincinnatihistory.org/post/the-new-city-the-evolution-of-cincinnati-from-the-1880-s-1930-s> (accessed 19 September 2022).

5 Shirley Idelson, *We Shall Build Anew: Stephen S. Wise, the Jewish Institute of Religion, and the Reinvention of American Liberal Judaism* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2022), 12–13.

6 Regarding the values of money, see “Measuring Worth,” <https://www.measuringworth.com>.

It was the flourishing HUC, and not the size of its Jewish community, that permanently cemented Cincinnati's role in the shaping of American Judaism. In 1883, eight years after the school welcomed its first class of students, HUC ordained the first four rabbis educated on American soil. That same year, the *St. Louis Jewish Tribune* feted Cincinnati's Jewish community for all it had achieved on behalf of American Jewry in eight short years:

History testifies to the fact that Cincinnati has earned the just title of a great Jewish-American center. It is a title that rests on the Jewish community's "spiritual backbone": the Hebrew Union College. As long as this remarkable school merits our time, wisdom and enterprise, we can rest assured that the scepter of American Israel will not soon depart from [Cincinnati].⁷

It was only the beginning. Five more rabbis were ordained the following year. By the time Wise died in March of 1900, he had already placed a "fatherly kiss of ordination" on the foreheads of more than sixty rabbis.⁸ Had he lived but four additional years, he would have personally ordained more than one hundred rabbis.

Toward the end of his long and productive life, Wise clearly foresaw that HUC would have a profound effect on Jewish life in America. On 13 September 1897, Wise spoke at HUC's opening ceremonies for the upcoming academic year. Brimming with pride, the aging rabbi addressed the school's students saying: "This Hebrew Union College has given our coreligionists fifty-two Rabbis and two lady teachers, college-bred men and women, whose influence upon American Judaism is felt all over the land." He took special note of the school's astonishing growth against all odds. Never in American history, Wise boasted, "nor

com/dollarvaluetoday/relativevalue.php?year_source=1870&amount=10000&year_result=2020. Henry Adler's congregation, Adath Israel, is today a prominent Cincinnati synagogue affiliated with the Conservative movement. In 1873, Adath Israel was one of the original members of the UAHC.

7 Sarna and Shapiro, *Op. Cit.*

8 There are many references to Wise's personal custom of placing a "fatherly kiss" on the foreheads of his ordines. For example, see *The American Hebrew*, 26 June 1896, p. 203.

in the sister institutions anywhere in Europe, [have] seventy young men with academic aspirations assembled under one roof.”⁹

By the 1930s, Cincinnati had earned a national reputation as one of the world’s most important centers of higher Jewish learning. Scholars and rabbis around the world took note of the quality and quantity of the school’s faculty, its rapidly growing library, and its learned publications. The arrival of refugee scholars fleeing the Nazi inferno that was consuming Jewish academies and great centers of Jewish learning across Europe in the 1930s underscored the school’s prominent role among American Jewry’s institutions of higher Jewish learning.

In many ways, HUC became the inheritor of Jewish intellectual life that had been snuffed out by the Nazis. In 1947, HUC established a graduate school for doctoral and advanced Jewish studies, which attracted Jewish and non-Jewish students who wanted to study with a large faculty that had recently been augmented by the arrival of several distinguished refugee scholars. The school’s library, already highly regarded, received thousands of precious “orphaned materials” that had survived the Holocaust.¹⁰ At this same time Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus (1896–1995) founded the American Jewish Archives (AJA) in Cincinnati, promising the AJA would “serve as a research center for established scholars, for students of the Hebrew Union College, and for others who wish to explore the American Jewish field.”¹¹

For nearly 150 years, HUC intensified Cincinnati’s reputation as a great center of Jewish life. Thousands of HUC’s rabbinical alumni have departed Cincinnati and settled in communities across North America and beyond. Their contributions to Jewish life and learning reinforced HUC’s importance and simultaneously maintained Cincinnati’s

9 *The American Israelite*, 16 September 1897, p. 4.

10 The Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (JCR) project sent hundreds of scholarly treasures to HUC’s library in Cincinnati. See Michael W. Grunberger, “Orphaned Treasures: Libraries and the Disposition of Ownerless Jewish Books in the Aftermath of the Holocaust,” Annual Feinstein Lecture, delivered at the Association of Jewish Libraries, Chicago, IL., 7 July 2009, <https://jewishlibraries.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/grunberger2009.pdf>

11 See also, Jacob Rader Marcus, “The Program of the American Jewish Archives,” *American Jewish Archives* 1, no. 1 (June 1948): 5.

respected role as the parent and protector of the oldest continuously existing seminary in the Western Hemisphere. Wise believed deeply that his small school would one day become renowned. “The present status of this College will appear a marvel of our century,” he once declared before an assembly of students, “the pride and gladness of your *alma mater* will be justified and appreciated.”¹²

This issue of our journal contains a documentary exploration of Jewish life in Cincinnati in celebration of the community’s bicentennial anniversary. We have invited fourteen scholars to identify one or two significant documents on the history of Jewish life in the Queen City that have heretofore gone unpublished and unnoticed. The contributors have included introductions to their self-selected and annotated documents that place these materials into a useful historical context. Readers will find that this commemorative collection contains a treasure trove of primary source material that enhances our understanding of important historical themes, including the Civil War, German culture, civil rights, immigration, suffrage, patriotism, education, and the Holocaust. These celebratory documents also offer us new insight into the lives and careers of noteworthy personalities who influenced Jewish life in the Queen City.

* * * * *

There exists an intriguing psychodynamic that informs the communal identity of both Cincinnatians in general and Jewish Cincinnatians in particular. Those familiar with Cincinnati’s history—both its general and its Jewish history—fully realize that nearly 150 years have passed since the Queen City was one of America’s ten largest metropolitan centers. Yet historically speaking, Cincinnatians remain immovably convinced that for two hundred years—thanks largely to the tenacity of its storied institutions and leadership—their Jewish community has made an oversized contribution to Jewish life in America. This conviction prevails among Cincinnati Jews to this day as they confront a changing landscape and an inscrutable future. Yet, as the city’s adaptation to demographic changes in the nineteenth century demonstrated, a living

12 Ibid.

community must never rely “on past laurels alone,” but rather, it must be strengthened, confident, and “prepared for whatever new tasks the future may present.”¹³

G.P.Z.
Cincinnati, Ohio

13 In 1894, Cincinnati’s oldest congregation, Bene Israel, commemorated the 70th anniversary of its founding. The congregation’s rabbi, David Philipson (1862–1949), concluded his anniversary address with these words. Found in David Philipson, *The Oldest Jewish Congregation in the West, Bene Israel, Cincinnati* (Cincinnati: Rockdale Avenue Temple, 1924), 35.



Jewish Civil War Memorial, United Jewish Cemetery, 1868.
(Courtesy Dana Herman)

Remembering the Civil War (1868)

ADAM D. MENDELSON

While monuments and memorials to the fallen soldiers of the American Civil War sprouted across the North in the immediate aftermath of the war, tributes by Jewish communities to their dead were strikingly absent. One of the few such initiatives—a proposal to re-inter the bodies of Jewish soldiers of both armies who had fallen in the battles around Chattanooga and to erect a “Jewish soldiers’ monument” in their honor—failed for want of funds.¹ Other memorials to Jewish soldiers were erected in the North, but only decades later.

Cincinnati, however, provided a telling exception. On Thanksgiving Day in 1868, a “considerable number of the most prominent members of the two [Reform] congregations” of the city gathered for the unveiling of the grand monument at Walnut Hills Jewish Cemetery: an obelisk of brown stone sixteen feet tall, mounted upon a granite base and topped with a bronze eagle, inscribed, “They died for their country.”² Both Isaac Mayer Wise and Max Lilienthal delivered addresses to mark the occasion.

That monument may have been the first Jewish war memorial in the United States.³ It was paid for in full by Jacob Elsas, a communal

1 *Israelite*, 13 September 1867: 6; 22 November 1867: 6; 29 November 1867: 2; 13 December 1867: 6; 20 December 1867: 2; 22 May 1868: 2; *Der Israelit* 9 (1868): 95. On reburial see Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and American Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), 219–238; David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2001), 68. On the erection of monuments during and immediately after the war see Thomas J. Brown, *Civil War Monuments and the Militarization of America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), Chapter 1.

2 *Israelite*, 27 November 1868: 6; 4 December 1868: 4; *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* 33 (1869): 92.

3 Samuel D. Gruber speculates that this may be the case. See “USA: War Memorial in Cincinnati’s Walnut Hills Jewish Cemetery,” Samuel Gruber’s Jewish Art & Monuments,

worthy whose clothing firm had produced large quantities of uniforms for the Union army and who had publicly pledged \$500 toward enlistment bounties during the war.⁴ The latter act of conspicuous patriotism did not save him from being picked upon by a provost marshal patrol during the “Siege of Cincinnati” in September 1862; Elsas was press-ganged after leaving the quartermaster depot, where he had gone to have payment vouchers signed. This may have been no accident: Contractors were much maligned in the press as malingerers and profiteers.⁵ Seemingly, Elsas bore no grudge for this humiliating treatment.

Yet Elsas and the crowd assembled that Thanksgiving Day in 1868 had more on their minds than just memorializing the soldiers buried at the foot of the monument. The obelisk was erected at a moment when General Orders No. 11 was publicly revisited during the presidential election campaign. Harping on Grant’s infamous order from 1862 that expelled all Jews from the vast territory under his command, his Democratic opponents urged Jews to exact retribution at the ballot box.⁶ The *Israelite* made this connection clear when it placed its report on the unveiling of the monument side by side with a lengthy review of Grant’s order and wartime antisemitism.

<https://samgrubersjewishartmonuments.blogspot.com/2017/11/usa-war-memorial-in-cincinnati-walnut.html> (accessed 4 January 2022).

4 Such was his success that Elsas left the clothing business in 1863 to develop commercial and residential property in Cincinnati as well as invest in existing businesses, including a tannery, a wool mill, and a brewery. See Jacob Elsas autobiography, 1818–1867, SC-3188, American Jewish Archives.

5 On contractors in Cincinnati and wartime military supply, see Adam D. Mendelsohn, *The Rag Race: How Jews Sewed their Way to Success in America and the British Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 169–176. On the siege see William Howard Neff, “The Siege of Cincinnati by a Pearl Street Rifle,” *Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 20, no. 4 (October 1962): 259, 265; Whitelaw Reed, *Ohio in the War, 1861–1865: Her Statesmen, Her Generals, and Soldiers* vol. 1 (Cincinnati: Moore, Wilstach & Baldwin, 1868), 83–98; Clinton W. Terry, “‘The Most Commercial of People’: Cincinnati, the Civil War, and the Rise of Industrial Capitalism, 1861–1865” (doctoral dissertation, Ohio University, 2002), 97–122.

6 On General Orders No. 11 in the 1868 election, see Jonathan D. Sarna, *When General Grant Expelled the Jews* (New York: Nextbook, 2012), 50–79.

In sponsoring the memorial, Elsas most likely wished to direct attention to Jewish sacrifice when the less-comfortable topic of Jewish profiteers and smugglers was returned to public view. Whatever his motives, the brief renaissance of General Orders No. 11 was an unwelcome reminder that the war could still make trouble for Jews. Indeed, this episode was but forewarning that the conflict would continue to bedevil the Jewish community. In the decades ahead, Jews would create new memorials—some in stone, others on the printed page—to stand against the charge that Jews had not done their part in the Civil War.⁷

Adam D. Mendelsohn is director of the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and associate professor of history at the University of Cape Town. He is the author of Jewish Soldiers in the Civil War: The Union Army (New York University Press, 2022) and is now working on a history of Jews in the Confederate army. Both projects draw on the Shapell Roster, a vast database that collects the stories of Jewish service members who served in the Civil War.

7 For more on this theme, see Adam D. Mendelsohn, *Jewish Soldiers in the Civil War: The Union Army* (New York: New York University Press, 2022), Chapter 6.

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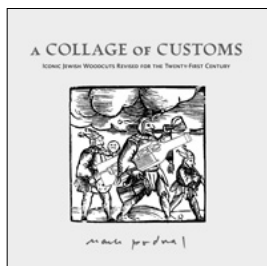
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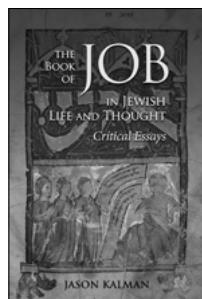
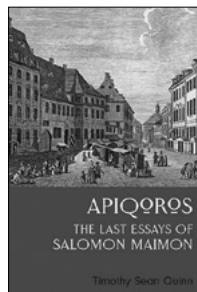
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by Timothy Sean Quinn

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The Book of Job in Jewish Life and Thought

by Jason Kalman

Despite its general absence from the Jewish liturgical cycle and its limited place in Jewish practice, the Book of Job has permeated Jewish culture over the last 2,000 years. Job has not only had to endure the suffering described in the biblical book, but the efforts of countless commentators, interpreters, and creative rewriters whose explanations more often than not challenged the protagonist's righteousness in order to preserve Divine justice. Beginning with five critical essays on the specific efforts of ancient, medieval, and modern Jewish writers to make sense of the biblical book, this volume concludes with a detailed survey of the place of Job in the Talmud and Midrashic corpus, in medieval biblical commentary, in ethical, mystical, and philosophical tracts, as well as in poetry and creative writing in a wide variety of Jewish languages from around the world from the second to sixteenth centuries.

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Isaac Mayer Wise and Kaufmann Kohler on German Culture in America (1875 and 1910)

INTRODUCED AND TRANSLATED BY MICHAEL A. MEYER

In 1875, the year in which he founded the Hebrew Union College, President of the Faculty Isaac Mayer Wise gave a speech on the German contribution to American life. Thirty-five years later and seven years after he moved to Cincinnati, another president of HUC, Kaufmann Kohler, delivered a speech on the same topic. The two men both addressed the *Deutscher Pionier-Verein* [German Pioneer Society] of Cincinnati, an inter-religious group dedicated to preserving the history and culture of German immigrants. Founded in 1868, by 1877 the society could boast nearly one thousand members. What is especially striking in the two presentations is that neither man even once mentioned the word “Jewish.” They both spoke as German immigrants to the United States who had not given up their German identity even as they added an American one. This is especially remarkable with regard to Wise, who came to be known as a fervent Americanizer among the German rabbis who immigrated to the United States, whereas Kohler remained far more rooted in German traditions.

Certain themes run through both speeches. Each of them expresses admiration for various aspects of German culture. And, for all of their American patriotism, neither Wise nor Kohler hesitates to compare German culture favorably to its American counterpart, which they criticize as being uncouth and puritan. Each mentions notable Germans who either visited or immigrated to America. They call attention to Germans who had been active in propagating the 1848 European revolution but, interestingly, omit the Jewish revolutionary leader Gabriel Riesser, who was fêted in Cincinnati when he visited in 1856. Both men pay attention

to German cuisine and beverage, especially the German fancy for beer, a drink much favored in Cincinnati and served in its famous beer gardens.

There are differences between the two speeches as well. Wise's speech is briefer and less formal—more of an address than a lecture. The language is down-to-earth, the content filled with personal experience. At one point Wise refers to “my profession” without specifying its nature. In discussing the contribution of German music, he compares it favorably to “the fiddling of a Negro,” which he had heard shortly after his arrival in New York. (It is well known that Wise was not an ardent abolitionist and that Cincinnati remained a segregated city well into the latter half of the twentieth century.) Wise expresses his horror at “the catechism,” a tendency of American religious denominations to insist on a narrow set of beliefs and declare anyone who does not subscribe to it “an infidel.” However, he does not relate this prejudice to his experience as a Jew but rather, more generally, to the closed American mind, which sets religion apart from philosophy and science. That the German mind, by contrast, did not engage in such isolation but insisted on a progress that encompassed both, Wise believed, was the outstanding German contribution to America.

German influence in America—and in Cincinnati—had not diminished significantly by the time Kohler gave his more formal lecture before the society, although it was soon to undergo a crisis as the United States entered World War I. Like other members of the HUC faculty—in particular historian Gotthard Deutsch—Kohler was a sworn devotee of German culture; he wanted it passed on—though not forced upon—future generations. It is remarkable that Kohler, known as a prominent local Jew, was asked to speak at a meeting of the society that celebrated the birthday of George Washington. It is hard to imagine a similar society in Germany at the time conferring a similar honor on the president of a Jewish institution.

When Kohler spoke in 1910, there had been a resurgence of anti-semitism in Germany where in some circles during the 1870s it had taken on racial justification. It is therefore not surprising that, early in his lecture, Kohler should make the point that German spirit and sentiment, but not German blood, truly characterized the German. Moreover, in an unspoken criticism of Germany, Kohler notes that the America of Washington and Lincoln goes beyond mere *tolerance* of the other to *appreciation* of all people and their values.

Kohler's lecture is filled with many more names than Wise's. In each, they are German, not Jewish names—Germans of some distinction, even when their German patrimony was in doubt, as in the case of Daniel Boone. Unlike Wise, Kohler makes specific and admiring reference to German-American abolitionists. More of a scholar than Wise, Kohler dwells upon German *Wissenschaft*, the contribution of Germans to the humanities and sciences. Kohler specifically refers to German biblical criticism—a subject that Wise had excluded from the HUC curriculum but was introduced later under Kohler's presidency. Of interest is Kohler's dim view of Carrie Nation, the aggressive temperance advocate remembered for her "visit" to the notorious saloons on Cincinnati's Vine Street. Kohler was an advocate of free choice; he was opposed to compulsion, whether in religion or in leisure activity. But despite all of his enthusiasm for German culture, in the end Kohler was not a German chauvinist. In his speech he urges continuity of German traditions but also favors a pluralism in which German culture will be integrated into the variegated nation that has become "our second fatherland."

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The Address of Dr. Isaac M. Wise, Delivered at the Monthly Gathering of the German Pioneer Society on March 2, 1875
 [*Der Deutsche Pioneer* 7 (March 1875): 32–35]

Gentlemen and Members of the Pioneer Society!

For some time you have requested of me that I deliver a short lecture, but I was not able to appear before this honored gathering at an earlier time. Yet now I have the great honor of having been invited by you to speak to the German Pioneers of Cincinnati.

Pioneers are harbingers, the forerunners, whom the great mass of stragglers can comfortably follow. Axe in hand, the pioneer laboriously carves out his path through the wilderness. He needs to struggle with the rigors

of nature, with untamed natives, and with the wild animals of the forest. Along his way as a pioneer, the German pioneer, in particular, has an especially hard lot since, in addition to all these rigors, there is the lack of knowledge of the language of the land that he has chosen to be his home....

Now with regard to the Germans in America, they contributed a great deal, not all of which has been recorded. If, like myself, one has travelled the land from north to south and, as I have done in my profession, slept in palaces and huts, associated with peasants, artisans, engineers, artists and scholars, then one easily grasps how extensively the German pioneer has influenced the culture of this nation.

If in the countryside you see well-ordered commercial buildings, splendid gardens, green meadows, and especially the vineyards, gleaming golden and purple, you can be certain that they are German. If you find an orderly cowshed, a well-filled silo, and large barns, you will find two German owners for every one who is an American or Irishman....

And then the magnificent cities and the smaller towns and villages of this land, especially here in the West—who has built them? All of them loudly proclaim the praise of German science, of German energy. If you go into shops and factories, who are their owners? Germans. German business and German industry populated the cities of this land, especially here in the West. Here, notably, they made themselves noteworthy, noticeable, necessary....

When I came to America and landed in New York, the first music that I heard was the fiddling of a Negro—that was on Broadway. Yes, the one-time slave, the Negro, made the only music in America, and all America danced to the fiddle of a Negro. When some years later I came back to New York, I heard magnificent military music on that same Broadway. Everyone crowded around. Who are these musicians? I asked. Germans, was the answer. That's right! The Germans brought music and song to America. The American, with his mouth full of chewing tobacco, obviously can't sing. That is why the Americans, at the time [of her visit] honored Jenny Lind, with her German

song, practically as if she were divine. . . .¹ The Americans at one time had no idea of music and song. Singing societies, male choirs, proper theater were unknown. In the theaters only the lowly farce was tolerated and significant artists, like Edwin Forrest,² had to go through an arduous struggle before they were acknowledged. Actually, such artists were never recognized by the Anglo-Americans and only the reputation, which they brought over from Europe, drew attention to them. And now a Daniel Bandmann,³ a Fechter,⁴ and a celebrated Janauschek⁵ travel triumphantly throughout the land.

Indeed, art was first brought here from Germany, and everyone knows how much it contributes to culture. As for me, I haven't done a lot in this area as an active participant, except that in 1848 in Albany, New York, I helped to found a German literature and singing society, which still exists today. Our numbers were very small in those days, and Albany, in addition, was not an especially appropriate place for German culture. We didn't even have a lager beer saloon. Yes, my honored pioneers, now Americans began to sing and drink beer, and to pay tribute to art. And the more they sing, the more do whisky and uncouthness disappear among them. The introduction of light beverages, beer and wine instead of whisky, is also an achievement of the Germans and had its influence on the country's morality. Till now there were mainly three countries in which brandy reigned: Russia, England, and America. The last of these will soon, thanks to German lager beer, need to be scratched from the ranks of this trio. . . .

1 Jenny Lind (1820–1887) was a Swedish singer, known as “the Swedish Nightingale.” Her ninety-three concerts in the United States, arranged by P.T. Barnum in 1850, enjoyed great success. She often sang in German and had close relationships with German composers, especially Felix Mendelssohn.

2 Edwin Forrest (1806–1872) was an American Shakespearean actor. His mother came from a German-American family. He performed in Cincinnati as well as other cities.

3 Daniel Bandmann (1837–1905), a Shakespearean actor, was born in Cassel, in the German state of Hesse, to parents who were likely Jewish.

4 Charles Fechter (1824–1879) was yet another Shakespearean actor. Though he was born in London, his father was of German extraction. Fechter settled in the United States in 1870.

5 Fanny Janauschek (1829–1904) was an actress born in Prague who immigrated to America in 1867.

A third element in the cultural history of our country that was brought over from Germany is the element of science, and, especially during the last 25 years, it has already contributed quite unbelievably. Twenty-six years ago, Theodor Parker⁶ in Boston wrote an entire innocent little book on the philosophy of religion. At the time it caused a stir like none other. It was amazing that people didn't stone him. Grief stricken, he died of consumption in Italy. Likewise Horace Greeley,⁷ who had experimented with philosophy, received a dreadful reception. It was just horrible the way people howled and hissed, yelled and screamed at him. Then came the scientifically educated Germans and brought philosophical thinking, especially in 1848. It's true, among the 1848ers were many whom we could well dispense with today; for them it was fortunate that they spoke only German. But during that stormy period there came, as well, a large, very large number of thinkers, and they became pioneers of culture in America. In those days there existed a more sharply distinguished sectarianism than anywhere else in the world. There was a huge dispute over the catechism. All of America bent the knee before the catechism and whoever did not believe in the specific teachings of a specific sect, or claimed that he did, was decried as an infidel! That was the worst insult that could be imposed on someone. An infidel was regarded as even lower than a slave robber. *He* is an infidel or *he* is capable of stealing a slave were regarded as having equivalent impact.

Now I have particular reminiscences from this period because, since 1850, I have not escaped from printers' ink. At that time I was already working for a newspaper in Albany. Now I've observed a gradual dawning. People began to read, and in the process of reading, to think. Slowly, some began to pursue German philosophy. One thought: people do not need to believe everything their great-grandfather believed; the human being is a thinking being. And so bit by bit came the light. The old

6 Theodore Parker (1810–1860), born in Lexington, Massachusetts, was a learned Unitarian minister and abolitionist. The reference is probably to the controversial *A Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion*.

7 Horace Greeley (1811–1872) was an American newspaper editor, politician, and controversial social reformer.

sulfur doesn't stink so bad any more. Since then people have stretched and reached out, and here and there sloughed off and polished. Yet nonetheless they claim to have remained unchanged. That is not the case. Americans have retained no more than their Sunday ideas and that's all. Their [old] ideas of daily life have passed away, disappeared, and for that German philosophy is responsible.

Following German philosophy there emerged, very slowly and well behind it, natural history. When the one-time Professor Amherst,⁸ the founder and president of Amherst College, wrote a short book with the title *Geology and Religion*, a mighty storm arose against him throughout the whole land. Everyone screamed and yelled that he dared to draw religion and geology toward each other. But gradually others came along; there was Agassiz⁹ etc., and they strode forward in the same area. It is quite astonishing how all that brought people ever closer to each other. When German progress came along, the entire Puritan bigotry fell to the ground. The storm has not ceased, for the locks have yet to be invented that will lock out progress, and so the great majority in America fell into line with the unavoidable. Today the American people is thoroughly imbued with German thinking, and that is the greatest victory of the German pioneers in America.

The speaker was rewarded with general applause, and after President Bast had expressed regret that the speaker had not further extended the lecture, he presented the unanimous thanks of the assembly.

A Celebration Imbued with German Feeling in which Dr. K. Kohler Spoke Golden Words on George Washington and the Germans of Cincinnati

[*Tägliches Cincinnatier Volksblatt*, Wednesday, 23 February 1910]

8 The reference is not clear. Amherst College was named after the town of Amherst, which had been named after Jeffrey, Lord Amherst, who was a general, not a professor. A contemporary book titled *Geology and Religion* cannot be located.

9 Louis Agassiz (1807–1873) was a Swiss-born American biologist and geologist who came to America in 1847. He is known especially for his work on the activity of glaciers.

In accordance with a venerable lovely custom the members of the German Pioneer Society and their ladies last night gathered in the large hall of the central gymnasium in order festively to mark the birthday of the founder of our republic, George Washington. For this occasion the hall was splendidly adorned with the flags of the old German fatherland and those of our new home. United in brotherhood, the colors of the two greatest lands of culture were prominently displayed together while from behind the dais, bedecked with a star-studded banner, the friendly face of the "birthday child" looked down upon the festive gathering.... [After opening formalities], there now followed the most important event of the celebration, the festive address with which Prof. K. Kohler, the president of the local Hebrew Union College, struck the proper tone. Those present listened to his words with breathless suspense, and repeatedly his appropriate and interesting remarks were interrupted by loud applause.

Professor Kohler spoke as follows:

My fellow Germans! I know well to appreciate the honor that you have bestowed upon me in that you invited me to give the German festive address at the birthday celebration for George Washington. Although I am not a German pioneer who, like some of you, thinned out trees in the primeval American forest or fought for the security and freedom of our great free country, I don't lag behind any of you in love and loyalty to the German language and way of thinking. I have always preserved the treasures of the German spirit, German idealism, and German sentiment, and with tongue and pen nurtured them on American soil. So allow me then to speak to you on a subject that as often as it is discussed always touches new heartstrings and always reveals new enlightening aspects: "The Influence of Germanism upon America."...

Ladies and Gentlemen! It is not German blood, but German spirit and sentiment that make the German what he is. And it is precisely that which makes remembrance of the noble Washington so precious and sacred for us. Admired both as a general and as a statesman, as he was by Frederick the Great, he can scarcely be compared with the latter, his contemporary. As a human being of simple masculine greatness, in his

rich human nobility he radiates out beyond all of the great men of world history. And just as it was by the grace of a benevolent providence that the young republic, from its cradle, could look up to such a father, so it was a further favorable destiny that on Washington's model Abraham Lincoln arose as a great hero of humankind. In sight of the moral and spiritual heights of a pure humanity all differences of blood and belief must retreat. That is the idea which inspired George Washington in all of his actions. That idea was not toleration—toleration is an ugly word!—no, rather it was appreciation of the role of various spiritual and ideational trends in bringing about a united realization of humanity's highest ideals on the virgin soil of America.... [After relating the service that the German martinet Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben rendered to Washington, Kohler proceeds to recount the contributions of the German spirit to various aspects of American cultural life.]

To begin with, there is the efficient and enthusiastic work of the German peasant. Here, to be sure, it is correct to speak of German blood. It was a mighty breed of men who in the 18th and 19th centuries, seeking to escape poverty as well as political and social oppression, and often the religious intolerance of the reigning church, sought out the shores of the new world where they found freedom and prosperity, life's loveliest possessions.

In the Quaker colonies of Pennsylvania, German moral rectitude and German loyalty created a pure and pious family life. Hard-working valiant men and women, loyal sons and daughters, produced ever more fruitful fields of grain, vegetable and fruit gardens, as well as beautifully planted forests surrounding their simple homes. Whether it is correct or not that Daniel Boone, the hero of the state of Kentucky, and Abraham Lincoln's grandfather, who called himself Linkhorn, derived from these German Pennsylvanians, it is certainly correct that these Germans, axe and rifle in hand, brought culture to the Wild West....

My friends, we all love German cuisine, which is much more nutritious and delectable than the unsavory English table. What really separates the human being from the animal is that he doesn't want to enjoy the gifts of nature in their raw condition, but rather, like a king, have them

handsomely brought to his princely table in a refined form, so that with gusto and love he may revel in the gifts of heaven. This joy of human existence got lost among the grim Puritans. That's why their kitchen, their baked goods, are so tasteless and why they fear the spirit-raising juice of grapes and hops. It is totally different for the Germans. Their lives cannot dispense with the pleasant mood induced by eating and drinking, for which the English speaker has no word equivalent to the German *Gemütlichkeit*....

I recently learned what many of you no doubt know, namely that the custom, spread all across America, to set cemeteries in a friendly, charming park with attractive garden plantings originated with a German Cincinnati, Adolph Strauch,¹⁰ who first laid out the Spring Grove cemetery in Clifton according to a Chinese pattern and which has everywhere been imitated.

From landscape to liberty is not so great a leap. "Liberty dwells on the mountains," sings Schiller.¹¹ The champion of press freedom in America was a German, New York's Peter Zenger.¹² In 1688, the German Moravian Brethren of Germantown [Ohio] were the first to raise their voices against the curse of slavery. And I don't need to tell you of the heroic sacrificial courage, with which the Germans collectively, regardless of religion or ethnicity, fought for freedom and humanity, since you cheered Schurz¹³ and Hecker¹⁴ and were witnesses to that great movement with which the entire German fatherland was, from the start, in such heartfelt sympathy.

10 Adolph Strauch (1822–1883) was a well-known Prussian-born landscape architect. In Cincinnati, where he moved around the middle of the century, he not only redesigned the Spring Grove Cemetery, but also Mount Storm Park, Eden Park, and Burnet Woods.

11 Schiller's "The Bride of Messina" contains the passage: "On the mountains there is freedom! The world is perfect everywhere, save where man comes with his torment."

12 John Peter Zenger (1697–1746) was a German immigrant printer in colonial New York who courageously championed freedom of the press.

13 After participating in the German revolutions of 1848–1849, Carl Schurz (1829–1906) immigrated to America, where he became prominent in the Republican Party. He served as a general in the Union Army during the Civil War.

14 Like Schurz, Friedrich Hecker (1811–1881) was a German revolutionary who came to the United States and served in a high position in the Union Army during the Civil War.

A striking example of the mighty influence of Germanism is the German press. United, it stood behind Lincoln, and it was not just Carl Schurz, but rather the idealists of the forties who, at the time of the Civil War, through the power of ideas, exercised a determinative influence. One should not forget that the range of vision of the American is historically limited. For him, so to speak, world history begins only with Washington and all the problems of the world are judged solely according to momentary practical considerations. It was only the representatives of German *Bildung*¹⁵ that gave him a deeper understanding of all historical cause and development and made him aware of the higher philosophical and historical meaning of contemporary issues....

In recent centuries the spirit of German *Wissenschaft*¹⁶ has made its triumphal entry into all American academic institutions. German philosophy, German linguistic, historical, and natural science—yes, also critical historical biblical research—reigns in all the larger universities of the land ever since Cornell and Johns Hopkins made a start in particular fields. German professors or the students of German professors occupy the country's most important chairs. The entire American school system that, to be sure, educates the people collectively to liberty and social independence more successfully than occurs in the old fatherland, nonetheless increasingly employs German pedagogical method....

Likewise the German athletic societies have exercised a strong influence on the physical education and training of American youth. Their gymnastic exercises gradually found their way into the country's primary and secondary schools. Like the German marksmanship societies, they have played a valuable role in victorious battles held under the Stars and Stripes....

German artistic ability revealed to Americans the magical realm of tonal music. A German, Graupner¹⁷ in Boston, created the American orchestra,

15 The term *Bildung* has no exact American equivalent. It represents a combination of education and internalized culture.

16 *Wissenschaft* refers to all academic disciplines, both in the humanities and the natural sciences.

17 Christoph Graupner (1683–1760) was a German composer of Baroque music.

which Damrosch¹⁸ and Thomas¹⁹ brought to such perfection. German male choirs disseminated German song and refined American taste. And here Cincinnati, with its first choir festival in the year 1849, deserves the place of honor. How mightily German song, the festive sound of music, began to ring out all over the land, where still in the year 1830 it seemed to the traveler like a sad wasteland because there was no song, no cheerful, melodious sound to delight and brighten his existence! Today the hearty enjoyment of music among the American people has become a need equivalent to their daily bread. And the realm of the beautiful, in the way Bach and Beethoven and Wagner have revealed it, is nurtured and honored in the hut and the palace, among the young and the old. That has been the achievement of the German daughter of heaven's singing and making music....

Thanks to German art and German science, the American has enriched and brightened up his life and learned to give it depth. What he lacks in his hasty strivings and angling for profit and pleasure is the disposition that spiritualizes life and the geniality that says to the moment: "Pause a moment, for life is beautiful."²⁰ On account of his puritanical strictness and one-sidedness he has gotten the impression that a person needs to steal the divine spark of joy from heaven. Unlike us, no Schiller has taught him that the son of heaven would grant him the bliss of human existence.²¹ That's why a Carrie Nation²² smashes all the beer and wine kegs as if the "God be among us"²³ dwelt there. That is why the clergy-

18 Walter Damrosch (1862–1950) was the German-born longtime conductor of the New York Symphony Orchestra.

19 Theodore Thomas (1835–1905) left Germany for the United States in 1845, where he later founded the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

20 A play on Goethe's *Faust*. In the original it is directed to the moment rather than to life as such: "*Verweile doch, du bist so schön.*"

21 Possibly playing on Schiller's "Ode an die Freude," which contains the word "*Götterfunken*" and the line: "*Durch des Himmels prächtigen Plan, Laufet Brüder, eure Bahn, Freudig wie ein Held zum Siegen.*"

22 Carrie Nation was a militant temperance advocate who, when she visited Cincinnati in 1901, allegedly marched up Vine Street, hatchet in hand, intent on smashing the street's multiple saloons and beer gardens.

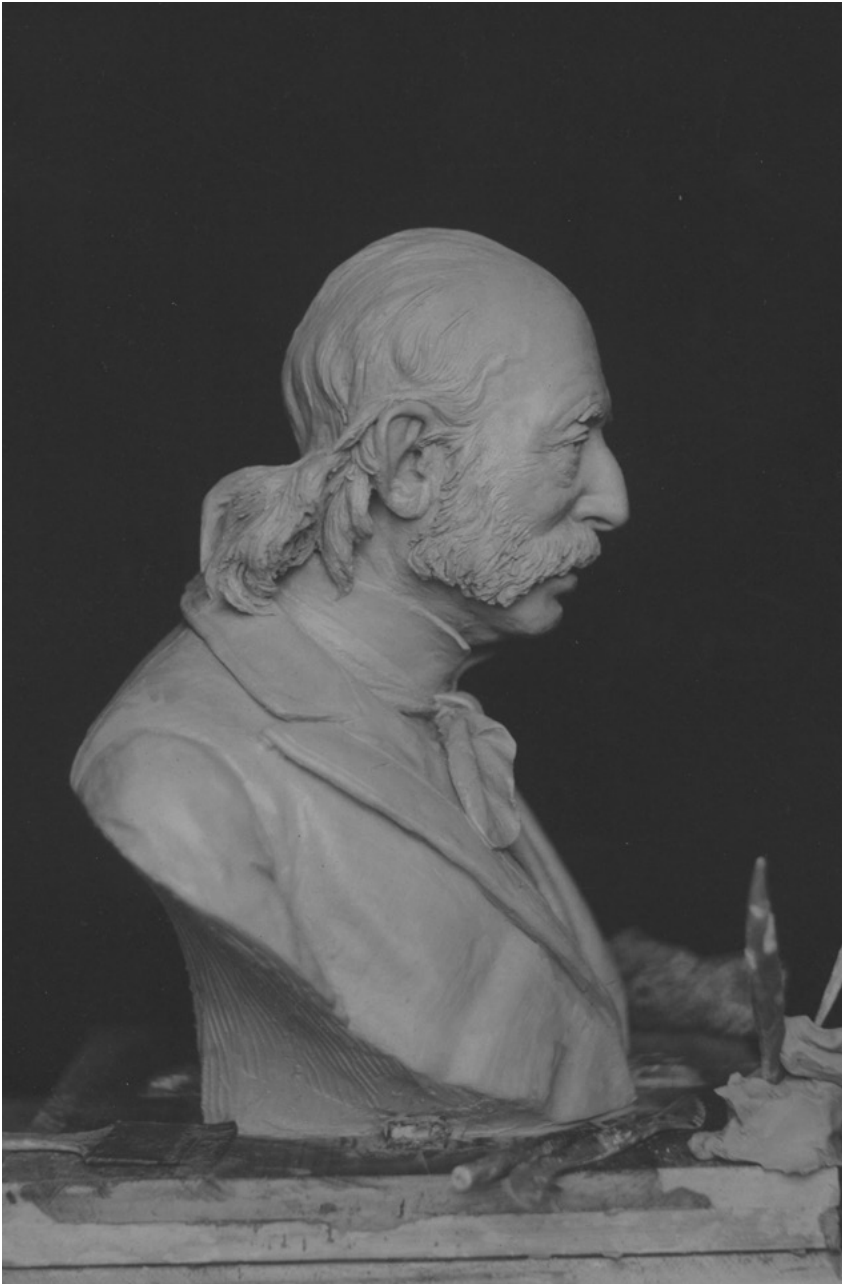
23 A euphemism for the devil.

man on the pulpit wants to see all the museums and concert halls and the temples of art closed on Sundays and the people driven with a whip into church or into heaven. That one can serve God only in freedom, that only the free man can truly be moral—that's not inscribed in the American's catechism. How then should or can the Germans win the Americans over to our view of life? Ladies and Gentlemen! Not by defiance or scorn! Not by crude injury of their feelings. Also not by a self-aggrandizing fight for our particular interests. Despite the German language and custom that we loyally nurture at home, our children should not lead a separated existence. The German language should not push out the language of the land. Nor should the German lifestyle disturb the nation's Sunday observance or encourage and try to hide the carousing and depravity of the wine bar. No. It is for German idealism, for the German life of the spirit and the soul that we struggle, and that means for the whole person. And that person is whole who pays full heed to all the aims and strivings of the heart and spirit. Within him all the strings of heart and soul encompass a single focus, joyously in harmony with his entire being.

A colorful, many-mansioned, inexhaustibly rich life lies before us in this new world of unlimited possibilities. A new type of human being is emerging from this mix of peoples, this melting pot of nations, races, and sects. Who, with the wisdom of a Pallas-Athena, shall to this Hercules be able to point out the way?

Let us not descend into trivial questions. Let us give expression through the German language: German song, German thought, poetry, education, and life. We stand for the rich content of a German life of the mind and spirit, for the treasures of the German world of ideas, and for German ideals and the German easy-going disposition. May they not disappear in Washington's fatherland, which has become our second fatherland, but rather rise anew to greater effect.

(Long-lasting loud applause followed upon the speaker's completion of his talk. That he knew how to hold the interest of his audience extraordinarily well is indicated by the fact that ... afterward his remarks continued to be extensively discussed by his listeners.)



Clay model of Wise bust, 1899.
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

Moses Jacob Ezekiel's Portrait Bust of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise (1899)

SAMANTHA BASKIND

Moses Jacob Ezekiel (1844–1917), the first Jewish American artist of international stature, received a commission in the late 1890s to make what is most likely the first sculpture modeled from life of a rabbi by a Jewish artist (1899).¹ Ezekiel received a letter in Rome requesting his services, and he swiftly answered, expressing the high honor that he felt at being chosen to execute the sculpture and his plan to immediately visit the United States to undertake the work.² An expatriate who lived in Rome from 1874 until the end of his life, Ezekiel stayed with family when visiting Cincinnati to complete the commission, a portrait bust of Isaac Mayer Wise, the chief early exponent of American Reform

1 Ezekiel is primarily known for his portrait busts and large public monuments, including the twenty-four-foot marble *Religious Liberty* (1876) in Philadelphia, beside Independence Mall. A Confederate veteran, Ezekiel sculpted a number of monuments to the Blue and the Gray, notably the thirty-three-foot Confederate memorial in Arlington National Cemetery (1914) and bust of Pennsylvania Governor Gregg Curtin (1903) for the Smith Memorial Arch in Philadelphia, a multigure monument honoring supporters of the Union in the Civil War. On Ezekiel, see Stan Cohen and Keith Gibson, *Moses Ezekiel: Civil War Soldier, Renowned Sculptor* (Missoula, MT: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, Inc., 2007); Alice M. Greenwald, ed., *Ezekiel's Vision: Moses Jacob Ezekiel and the Classical Tradition*, exh. cat. (Philadelphia: National Museum of American Jewish History, 1985); and David Philipson, "Moses Jacob Ezekiel," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 28 (1922): 1–62. For a virtual exhibition about *Religious Liberty*, see Samantha Baskind, "An Enduring Monument: Moses Jacob Ezekiel's *Religious Liberty* (1876)," Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History, Philadelphia (November 2020). <https://www.nmajh.org/exhibitions/enduring-monument/> (accessed 29 March 2022).

2 "Bust of the Venerable Isaac M. Wise Completed in Clay By Ezekiel the Sculptor," *Cincinnati Enquirer* (28 August 1899): 10.

Judaism. Ezekiel modeled Wise from life at the rabbi's farm in North College Hill, recalling that each morning he got up early because it took about an hour to reach his destination. Besieged by sweltering summer heat, Ezekiel complained of the conditions and marveled that he was able to do the necessary work.³ A photograph of the final sitting, taken through a window because Ezekiel did not want the clay moved, shows the sculptor in a heavy smock and Wise wearing a formal suit jacket and button-down shirt (opposite page).

In the final conception, Wise wears a buttoned vest, with one button undone, underneath a wide V-notched lapel outercoat accentuating his shoulders. Wise has a jaunty ascot tied around his neck, the right corner partially tucked into his vest and the left crossing over onto his coat. A bushy mustache spreads over his cheeks to his thick sideburns; his hair, long in the back, is tucked behind his ears and hangs a little past the bottom of his neck. The rabbi's dress, like that of other Reform Jews, reveals how most assimilated Jews wanted to be perceived within the larger American population. Ezekiel's Sephardic family dressed in this fashion, as did the artist himself.

By the time the bronze was cast, Wise had died; however, he did see the clay model, which, according to his son, Isidor Wise, the rabbi had approved (p. 18).⁴ That clay was shipped back to Rome, where Ezekiel had it bronzed. By then, Ezekiel had attained international stature, his comings and goings regularly followed in the news. The *New York Times* reported that Ezekiel would courier the finished sculpture to the United States from Rome, setting sail from Liverpool on 19 May of the new millennium.⁵ Two months passed, and the magazine *Monumental News*

3 Moses Jacob Ezekiel, *Moses Jacob Ezekiel: Memoirs from the Baths of Diocletian*, ed. Joseph Gutman and Stanley F. Chyet (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975), 392.

4 Isidor Wise, "The Sculptor and the Rabbi," *Union Home Study Magazine* (October 1920): 5.

5 "Bust of I.M. Wise: Present from His Congregations Soon to be in Cincinnati," *New York Times* (9 May 1900): 6. As demonstration of Ezekiel's celebrity at the turn of the century, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* covered his voyage across the ocean as well, adding that following his visit to the Queen City he would travel to Louisville apropos matters related to his Thomas Jefferson monument. "Men and Matters," *Cincinnati Enquirer* (28 April 1900): 5.



Moses Jacob Ezekiel and Isaac Mayer Wise, 1899.
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

announced the arrival of the sculpture and its pedestal, adding, “It was pronounced a beautiful work of art.”⁶

Three months after her husband’s death, Selma Bondi Wise donated the bronze to Hebrew Union College (now held by the Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles).⁷ Four years later, at the request of Wise’s son-in-law Adolph Ochs, editor of the *New York Times*, Ezekiel replicated the likeness in marble for his patron’s home; the rabbi’s heirs later donated this version to Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati (next page). In

6 “Sculpture,” *Monumental News* 12, no. 7 (July 1900): 396. The magazine also featured Ezekiel in a profile a year earlier, noting that he had been busy for several weeks modeling the bust of Wise. “Among the Sculptors,” *Monumental News* 11, no. 12 (December 1899): 686.

7 Letter from Selma Wise to president and members of the Board of Governors of the Hebrew Union College, 26 June 1899. Curatorial Files, Bust of I.M. Wise file, Skirball Museum, Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, OH.



Isaac Mayer Wise bust in marble, 1903.
(Courtesy Skirball Museum, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati)

1906 Ochs asked Ezekiel for a third copy of the bust for display at the National Jewish Hospital for Consumptives in Denver, now known as National Jewish Health, an organization that Wise supported. That marble currently resides at the Hebrew Union College branch in New York City. As liberal in thinking as Reform Judaism was—and is—none of the three busts decorated a synagogue sanctuary, perhaps a nod to a misunderstanding of the second commandment, which when interpreted strictly prohibits the making of images.

One of Ezekiel's most intriguing sitters, the Bohemian-born Wise came to the United States in 1846 and eight years later assumed the pulpit at B'nai Yeshurun synagogue in Cincinnati. There he published an English-language weekly, the *Israelite*, retitled the *American Israelite* in 1874, in print to this day. The organ allowed Wise to espouse the ideology of Reform Judaism to a wide, national audience, and B'nai Yeshurun stood as a flagship institution for liberal Jewish observance, with Wise the charismatic spokesman at its helm. B'nai Yeshurun advocated mixed-gender seating, introduced organ music during worship, and instituted considerably shorter services, with widespread English translations. In 1875 Wise founded and became president of the first Reform seminary in America, Hebrew Union College, also based in Cincinnati, which trained rabbis to lead Reform congregations throughout the country, and now the world.

Ezekiel, whose family moved to Cincinnati after the Civil War to escape ravaged Richmond, lived amid these dramatic changes.⁸ He viewed them as weakening the Judaism he grew up with; his preference was discussed in a letter from 1892 that he wrote to the editor of the *American Hebrew*, a nationally distributed newspaper with a conservative bent: "The operatic-hat-off ape-ism service [of Reform Judaism] is very distasteful to me. . . . All the intelligent Christians I have met have more respect for a real Jew than one who apes [them] in a service dedicated to the one God."⁹ Despite his different ideology, years later Ezekiel—

8 On the rich history of Cincinnati Jewry see Nancy H. Klein and Jonathan Sarna, eds., *The Jews of Cincinnati* (Cincinnati: Center for the Study of the American Jewish Experience, 1989).

9 Letter from Moses Jacob Ezekiel to Philip Cowen, 4 November 1892, Moses Jacob

always eager for paid commissions, intrigued by all things Jewish, and something of a celebrity hound—gladly accepted the commission from Wise’s Reform congregation to model the bronze bust in honor of the rabbi’s eightieth birthday.

As the bust neared completion, Ezekiel wrestled with Wise’s expression. Ezekiel felt that during their sittings he had aroused Wise’s “moods and humors,” but not the rabbi’s passion for his ideals, his “expression of confidence, determination, enthusiasm and fire I know he exhibits when he is fighting for what he knows is right,” as Isidor Wise paraphrased the artist’s sentiment. Isidor further remembered a suggestion made to Ezekiel that the rabbi’s archetype was Moses and that questioning the great lawgiver’s status might create the desired effect. A few days later, with the sculpture complete, Ezekiel announced, according to Isidor, “Moses turned the trick.”¹⁰ In the ultimate conception, though, Wise does not appear fiery but rather in deep concentration, his slightly knotted eyebrows indicating his thoughtfulness and concentration. At eighty, he looks understandably weary, with tired eyes gazing slightly downward and circles underneath. Ezekiel also made an ink drawing of Wise showing him in profile and sitting in a chair holding a rolled-up paper, likely a copy of *American Israelite*, tendering the same thoughtful, deeply contemplative gaze (opposite page).¹¹

Ezekiel came to the sitting with more than a passing knowledge about Wise and his ideas. Ever curious about matters of import to him, Judaism was a prevailing interest for the artist, whose childhood was suffused with Jewish thinking. Ezekiel’s father, Jacob Ezekiel, was heavily involved in Jewish communal life; he was a charter member of Richmond’s chapter of B’nai B’rith and served as the secretary of Richmond’s first synagogue. Sympathetic to Reform Judaism, Jacob

Ezekiel papers, MS-44, correspondence 1866–1899, The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH.

10 Wise, “The Sculptor and the Rabbi,” 5.

11 Morris Goldstein painted a large, three-quarter-length undated portrait of Wise holding a book, with his arm resting on an end table on which sits a copy of the *Israelite*. The painting is in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC (ca. 1870–1900).



Pen and ink drawing of Isaac Mayer Wise, 1899.
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

Ezekiel was also secretary to the Board of Governors at Hebrew Union College for twenty years. At the same time, the elder Ezekiel was a scholar of Jewish theology and owned all writings by Moses Maimonides, one of the chief Torah scholars whose work is revered to this day. This background provided Ezekiel with intimate knowledge of both the Bible and Jewish thought, demonstrated not only by his interaction with Rabbi Wise but also the esoteric iconography of some of his sculptures.

During the sittings Wise and Ezekiel—an unlikely pair—discussed a number of topics, some controversial. Among them were reincarnation, Theosophy, and Zionism. Their thoughts on Zionism could not have been more opposite, and Ezekiel described conversation about the subject “hot.” One afternoon Ezekiel and Wise engaged in an especially spirited conversation. The rabbi, Ezekiel recalled, believed “America was the Jerusalem for the Jews, and he did not believe in praying for a return to the Holy Land, nor did he believe at all in the restoration of the Jewish nation.”¹² Wise himself opined in the *American Israelite* in 1882: “The idea of the Jews returning to Palestine is no part of our creed.”¹³ An ardent proto-Zionist, Ezekiel responded to Wise that he felt “the time would come when there would be a central government in Jerusalem again and that Palestine would flourish,” which the rabbi told Ezekiel was “an old-fashioned notion.”¹⁴ As cosmopolitan as he was, Ezekiel still retained belief in traditional Judaism and markedly supported Israel’s rebirth.

Ezekiel’s signature on the original bronze bust is quite telling. On the left side of Wise’s jacket, Ezekiel signed in Latin, “M. Ezekiel Fecit 1899,” meaning “made by M. Ezekiel” or “M. Ezekiel made me.” By signing in a mannered, classical fashion, Ezekiel connected himself to antiquity. Ezekiel knew well the long history of this mode of signing in art; after his move to Italy one of his first stops was to the Pantheon (c. 125 CE), which is distinctly inscribed in large bold, capital letters:

12 Ezekiel, *Memoirs*, 392.

13 Isaac Mayer Wise, *American Israelite* (14 July 1882): 12. For more on Wise’s views about this subject see Melvin Weinman, “The Attitude of Isaac Mayer Wise toward Zionism and Palestine,” *American Jewish Archives* 3, no. 2 (January 1951): 3–23.

14 Ezekiel, *Memoirs*, 393.

“M. AGRIPPA L.F. COS TERTIUM FECIT” (Marcus Agrippa, son of Lucius, three-time consul, made this).¹⁵ By associating his art with the classical past, Ezekiel aimed to demonstrate quality and authenticity, and he created an aura around the bust. Such an authorial mark, used only occasionally and surely more conspicuous than Ezekiel’s typical signature—his name, place of execution, and date—creates a bit of a performative flourish that calls attention to himself. This signature both identifies Ezekiel with the work and asserts his authority within a classical framework; it proclaims more presence than that of a creator whose signature is hidden at the back of the bust.

Interestingly, Ezekiel occasionally signed with the Latin “fecit,” including on the top of the base of his full-length bronze sculpture of Baruch Spinoza, hewing close to the foot of the Jewish Dutch Enlightenment philosopher (1880). Spinoza also held unorthodox views on Judaism, although much more subversive, and looms large as a figure of even greater prominence than Wise. Ezekiel was apparently intrigued by these radical intellectual figures, men of Jewish vision perhaps not unlike his own recently deceased father, yet with whom he differed in thinking.

The second version of Wise bears Ezekiel’s signature in Greek, with capital letters—“Ezekiel of Richmond made me”—distinguishing the bust even more than the bronze original. It was typical for ancient Greek potters or sculptors to inscribe something of the sort on their work, but it is peculiar that Ezekiel chose this signature on this posthumous portrait of Wise, for he rarely did so. The 1906 bust of Wise, made in Rome, is incised differently; in the same spot and on a diagonal Ezekiel inscribed, as he typically did, “M. Ezekiel Rome 1906.”

Ezekiel may very well have signed the first two busts of Wise in an aggrandized, stylized way to demonstrate his own erudition for such a learned individual, now passed away, with whom he engaged in intellectual conversation at their sittings. It is also curious that Ezekiel notes Richmond as his residence rather than Rome, which he commonly used. Perhaps in sculpting a rabbi whose impact on American Judaism was

15 *Ibid.*, 173.

so great—whether Ezekiel accepted his teachings or not—the sculptor felt the need to stress his American roots. Another contributing factor may be Ezekiel’s own interest in Greek culture around that period of time. In 1904 he chiseled draped marble portrait busts of the playwright Sophocles (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts) and statesman and orator Demosthenes (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts). Although this was the year after the Greek-signed portrait of Wise, both of the former are signed simply with the artist’s name, date, and city of execution: Rome. Even before that, Ezekiel’s interest in Greek themes manifested with a group sculpture titled *Blind Homer and Young Guide* (University of Virginia), depicting a young boy with a lyre sitting at the feet of the author of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. Ezekiel made *Blind Homer* in 1881 of his own volition.

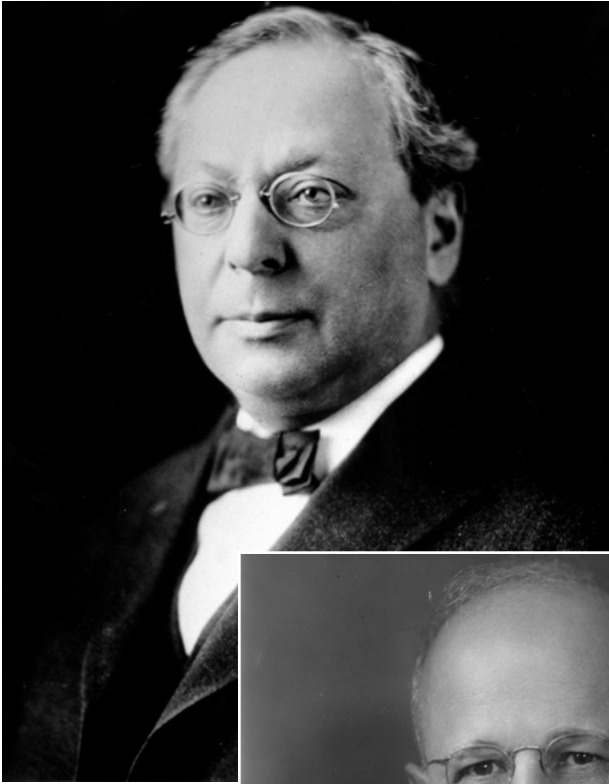
Yet one more factor should be taken into consideration: Jacob Ezekiel’s connections with Cincinnati’s Hebrew Union College and Reform Judaism and his death a few weeks before the sitting. Soon after Jacob Ezekiel’s death and before the sitting with his son, Wise wrote an editorial in the *American Israelite* effusively praising the elder Ezekiel. Among many accolades, Wise wrote: “His life was beautiful, and all who knew him are the better for that knowledge. Such a man does not die, as the world is forever brighter and better because of the life he lived in it.”¹⁶ In light of such affinity, it is likely that Ezekiel crafted the notable signature to denote an especially strong relationship between Wise and the Ezekiel family.

Ezekiel’s bust of Isaac Mayer Wise served both men’s ambitions in different ways. For Wise and his congregation, a portrait bust—especially one made by an artist of international repute—further legitimized the rabbi’s position as a significant American leader. More than a decade earlier, Ezekiel had carved a sculpture of one of America’s founding fathers: a marble bust of Thomas Jefferson for the Senate’s Vice-Presidential Bust Collection, the earliest government commission for the collection, which prominently sits to the right above the presiding officer’s chair in the U.S. Senate Chamber (1888). For Ezekiel, he enjoyed an

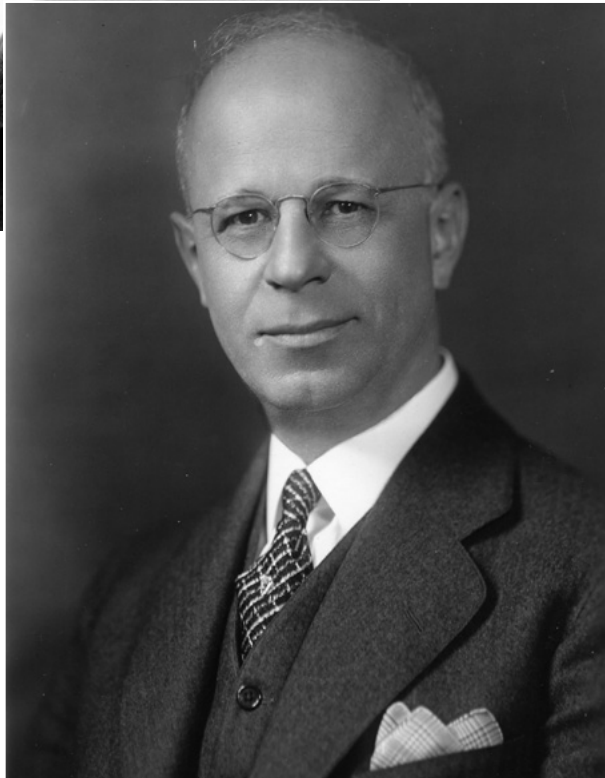
16 Isaac Mayer Wise, “Editorial,” *American Israelite* (8 June 1899): 1.

extended audience with a rabbi of great import to discuss his ideological stance on Judaism, and he advanced his career by making the bust. By signing, even imprinting, the busts in such highly original fashions, Ezekiel created an enduring connection between two influential figures in American Jewish history. Both sculptor and rabbi benefited from their brief interaction, each man promoting his individual purpose through an unprecedented artistic collaboration.

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Louis Marshall
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)



Julian Morgenstern
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

Patience in Cincinnati vs. Activism in New York (1913)

JEFFREY S. GUROCK

Rabbi Julian Morgenstern was deeply troubled when he learned of the successful culmination of a six-year struggle in the New York legislature to pass a bill outlawing discrimination in public accommodations. The specific predicate for the effort, which New York-based attorney and newly elected president of the American Jewish Committee Louis Marshall had championed, was the exclusion of Bertha Rayner Frank from a fancy hotel in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Frank was the sister of a Jewish U.S. Senator from Maryland, and her humiliation had put a face on the long-standing problem of social antisemitism that had beset those American Jews who prized integration within elite American social circles. Using his political connections, including enlisting the backing of gentile allies, Marshall had, over time, convinced enough lawmakers that it was within the state's best interest to back the enactment.¹

Marshall shared Morgenstern's deep commitment to the teachings and institutions of Reform Judaism. In 1913 Marshall was an officer of New York City's most prestigious Reform congregation, Temple Emanuel, and three years later he was elected its president. Morgenstern had been ordained in 1902 at the Hebrew Union College (HUC), where he

1 For details on the six-year campaign that led to the passage of the Levy-Wagner Act, see Jeffrey S. Gurock, "The 1913 New York State Civil Rights Act," *AJS Review* 1 (1976): 102–106. On the long-standing problem of resort exclusion of Jews that the Frank case highlighted and a comprehensive revisiting of the 1877 Seligman-Hilton affair, the most famous incident of such discrimination that has loomed large in historical writing on antisemitism in America, see Britt P. Tevis, "'Jews Not Admitted': Anti-Semitism, Civil Rights, and Public Accommodation Laws," *The Journal of American History* (March 2021): 847–870. See also Evan Friss's article, "Blacks, Jews, and Civil Rights Law in New York, 1895–1913," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 24, no. 4 (Summer, 2005): 70–99.

then became a professor of biblical studies. In 1921 he was elevated to the presidency of the College, a post he retained for a quarter century. But the two Reform eminences differed fundamentally on the question of the worthiness of activism as a strategy in dealing with antisemitism. Through a public exchange scant weeks after the bill was passed in April 1913, the men articulated two different and provocative views that represented two divergent approaches to answering prejudice against Jews: that of a patient Cincinnati vs. that of an activist New York. Even more intriguing, embedded in Morgenstern's argument is an attitude toward race that seemingly did not comport with the Reform movement's official stance on the pursuit of social justice.²

Morgenstern was dismayed that "a Jewish influence" specifically from the "State of New York" was behind this bill. As he saw the effort, it was the creation of social climbers "especially in the State of New York" who "often seek to force their way into those resorts where they are not wanted." And "the mere fact of their exclusion makes the particular resort more desirable and whets the ambition to force their way into the forbidden circle." Moreover, Morgenstern discerned that the new law would be "most easily circumvented.... Employe[e]s and guests will find it no difficult task to make the place uncomfortable for the Jewish invaders." Most important, "legislation which is unmistakably backed by Jewish influence and nothing else ... must react as a boomerang upon our own Jewish Question." For him, the only answer to the problem of discrimination was "time and education."³

Marshall was stung by this critique aimed at him and his cohort of activists. He hastened to respond in both New York and St. Louis Jewish

2 For a comprehensive biography of Marshall, see Matthew Silver, *Louis Marshall and the Rise of Jewish Ethnicity in America: A Biography* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2013). Morgenstern has, to date, not been favored with a full-length biography. On his biblical scholarship and his leadership at HUC, see David Komerofsky, "Julian Morgenstern: A Personal and Intellectual Biography," rabbinic thesis (Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, 1999). It does not discuss Morgenstern's views on race but notes how deeply he was influenced by the Pittsburgh Platform. See p.10 and passim.

3 Julian Morgenstern, "Self- Protection or Self-Assertion?," *B'nai B'rith News* (May 1913): 41.

weeklies. There he wrote disparagingly of Morgenstern's "cringing, fawning spirit of the Ghetto." For him, the fight was not for interlopers but rather for "thousands of self-respecting Jews who do not desire to intrude where they were not welcome who nevertheless felt aggrieved by insulting publications." It clearly stuck in his craw to see advertisements, even in highbrow magazines, that screamed, "No Jews or dogs allowed!" As far as discriminators and Jew-haters were concerned, Marshall observed that even if offenders could find ways around the law, "once it became known that narrow and bigoted men may not with impunity inflict public insult on any part of our population by invading their racial or religious 'holy of holies,' something which 'is worth while' will have been 'gained' through this maligned legislation."⁴

Explicit in Marshall's rebuttal was his understanding that this battle was not for Jews alone. Rather it was for "any part of the population," including those who were racially different. Such a position was in line with Marshall's long-enduring efforts to promote civil rights for Blacks. For him, expansion of tolerance through legislation would also mitigate against any anti-Jewish boomerangs. This stance was an essential part of his social and religious orientation.⁵

However, Morgenstern did not share this early racial justice orientation. In making his case, he not only granted the "anti-Semitic aristocrat" the right to avoid association with Jews, but he asserted that "I must admit that some people I do judge as a class and base my likes and dislikes from a social standpoint upon the consideration of them as a class. I have never invited a negro [*sic*] to dine with me, and probably will never do so. I must confess that I even feel discomfited when I sit next to one of them at the theatre." For Marshall, Morgenstern's viewpoint smacked not only of "racial prejudice" perfect for "Southern consumption" but of the rabbi's lack of self-respect.⁶

4 Louis Marshall, "The Civil Rights Law," *American Hebrew* (20 June 1913): 203–204.

5 On support for civil rights constituting an essential part of Marshall's and his fellow German American Reform leaders' religious values, see Hasia Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915–1935* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977).

6 Marshall, 203–204, for his reaction to Morgenstern's statement on race. Remarkably,

Morgenstern and Marshall assuredly read the eighth principle of the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform very differently. In it, the Reform rabbis who signed onto this document, and the laity it would influence, committed themselves “to participate in the great task of modern times, to solve on the basis of justice and righteousness, the problems presented by the contrasts and evils of the present organization of society.” For Morgenstern, solving the problems of Jim Crow—which were endemic both north and south of the Mason-Dixon Line and its extensions westward to Kentucky and Ohio, where Cincinnati was—was not one of modern society’s great tasks. For Marshall, the treatment of Blacks would define how just and righteous society might be, whether in New York or Cincinnati.⁷

In the end, Morgenstern was right about the lack of impact legislation had upon restrictionists. For decades after 1913, they still found many ways to keep their doors closed to Jews and other minorities, be they in Cincinnati or New York. But it was Marshall’s approach that would dominate the thinking and actions of Reform students and rabbis not only during Morgenstern’s tenure at HUC in the Queen City but long thereafter nationwide.⁸

Tevis—in her outstanding study that “illuminates similarities between anti-Semitism and anti-Black racism and how Black and Jewish Americans’ civil rights struggles overlapped and interacted”—does not comment on Morgenstern’s racist rhetoric. While she notes “Jews’ disagreements about how to respond to anti-Jewish exclusionary advertisements” she does not discuss the Marshall-Morgenstern contretemps. See Tevis, 849–850, 858n30.

7 For a text of the Pittsburgh Platform, see <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-pittsburgh-platform> (accessed 6 April 2022). On the problem of race in Cincinnati of that time period see, for example, “Cincinnati Colored School System,” https://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Cincinnati_Independent_Colored_School_System (accessed 30 March 2022).

8 On the difficulties of enforcing the civil rights legislation after 1913, see Gurock, 108–114 and Tevis, 859–861. On students and rabbis from HUC—many of whom were ordained by Morgenstern—and their involvement in early civil rights work, see P. Allen Krause, “Rabbis and Negro Rights in the South, 1954–1967,” *American Jewish Archives* (April 1969): 20–97 and his *To Stand Aside or Stand Alone: Southern Reform Rabbis and the Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Mark K. Bauman with Stephen Krause (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2016).

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Self-Protection or Self-Assertion? By Rabbi Julian Morgenstern, PH.D.

Perhaps this paragraph is not very aptly named. But it is intended to bring home to the consideration of the American Jew a very serious question. The legislature of the State of New York has recently amended its Civil Right Law, so as to more stringently prevent discrimination because of creed, color or race in places of public accommodation, such as hotels, summer resorts, theaters and the like. The mere issuance of printed matter to the effect that any one particular body of people is regarded as undesirable, shall be sufficient evidence of intentional violation of the law. In such case the aggrieved party can recover damages in the amount of one hundred to five hundred dollars, while the state may also impose a like fine and imprisonment from thirty to ninety days. The law is to become effective on September 1st, 1913.

It is safe to say that there is Jewish influence behind this bill. It is not the negro, nor the Chinese, nor the Indian, who seeks to force his way into summer hotels where he is not wanted. And the Christian foreigner who has accumulated sufficient wealth and refinement and Americanization, to impel him to frequent such resorts, is gladly welcomed and made to feel perfectly at home. It is against Jews, and Jews alone, or "Hebrews", as the usual exclusive summer resort literature terms them, that all this discrimination is directed. And, speaking frankly, it is Jews too who frequent summer resorts, especially in the State of New York, and often seek to force their way into just those resorts in which they are not wanted. The mere fact of their exclusion makes the particular resort more desirable and whets their ambition to force their way into the forbidden circle. They will show the narrow Gentile how nice and refined and superior the Jew can really be, and how perfectly well fitted to associate on terms of equality and intimacy with the patrician descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers of the New York Knickerbockers. We all know of plenty of Jews of this class. Their number is legion; their ideals and motives are not above suspicion.

The Adirondacks and Catskills are especially rich in exclusive summer hotels, exclusively in the sense that no "Hebrews" are wanted, or politely, "the patronage of Hebrews is not solicited." And the corollary of this proposition is that New York State is rich in just those Jews who would break down the barriers of this exclusiveness, force their way, not where they are really not wanted, but only where certain narrow, ignorant, but really very nice and desirable people only think that Jews are not wanted. They will force their way there, partly because this very exclusiveness is enticing, and also because they feel that they will be doing a great work for Judaism and mankind thus by their actual influence and example minimizing anti-Semitism and racial prejudice in America. There can be no doubt that some Jewish influence is behind the new law.

The question is, is it worth while, and is it wise. In the first place, is it worth while? What is to be gained? Even granting for the sake of argument that the bill represents the best of Jewish thought and influence, and would result in the attainment of an end desired by all Jews, instead of a certain unrepresentative and discredited class, what good is going to result from it for the Jews or the Judaism of this country? It is a law, the provisions of which can and will be most easily circumvented. In fact the bill itself states that it can not and does not prevent the giving of any personal answer in writing to a personal inquiry as to whether the hotel, for example, is exclusive or not. In other words, while the "no Hebrews wanted" printed literature will be discontinued, every inquiry as to rooms, rates, etc. will be answered with a written and personal letter to the effect that the climate of the place is not conducive to Jewish health and comfort. And if by chance some thick-skinned Jewish family, the social ambitions of whose daughters are too strong even for such delicately-worded hints, should insist upon its rights, accorded by the new law, and force its way into the exclusive hotel, proprietor, employees and guests will find it no difficult task to make the place altogether uncomfortable and impossible for the Jewish invaders. Besides the bill does not go into effect until September 1st when the summer season for this year will be over, and nine months of forgetfulness and a thick layer of dust, to say nothing of the possibility of repeal next spring, might well

make the whole law ineffective. Can it be that perhaps the wise solons of the New York legislature were really having considerable fun with some of the socially-ambitious and influential Jewish constituents? The suspicion is inescapable.

Besides there is one other matter that occurs to me. I am not a lawyer, and consequently am unable to discuss the nice points of constitutionality with any professional assurance and certainty that I am right. But I am a human being, with all the natural likes and dislikes of most human beings. And I must confess that in my life's course I have met some people whom I liked and was happy to associate with them, and have also met an equal, or perhaps, even greater number of people, whom I dislike, or at least was indifferent to, and did not care to associate with them. And I must also confess that among those people whom I have met, and did not care to associate with, there were a good many Jews of all kinds and classes. I do not think that the mere fact that they were Jews prejudiced me against them. I am really a good Jew myself and proud of the fact, and have a feeling that Judaism itself constitutes a bond that unites all Jews in some sort of way. And yet I have met many Jews whom I have disliked and did not care to associate with. Nor do I think it was because of any inherent snobbishness in me. I have taken stock of myself very often, and can honestly say that I believe I am democratically inclined. And yet the fact remains that there are a good many Jews that I don't like and don't care to associate with. I suppose the likes and dislikes are wholly personal. And I believe it to be a natural and inherent right of the individual to determine just whom he does like and wishes to associate with, and whom he dislikes and does not wish to associate with.

Since I am a Jew myself and know Jews pretty well, I determine my likes and dislikes among Jews personally. But I must admit that some people I do judge as a class, and base my likes and dislikes from the social standpoint upon the consideration of them as a class. I have never yet invited a negro to dine with me, and probably will never do so. I must confess that I feel a little discomforted when I sit next to one at the theater... No doubt it is the result of certain inherent sentiments, which after all

might not endure logical analysis. Perhaps too my posterity may come to feel differently in this matter, and my daughter or possible grandchildren even come to sit down to dinner on terms of social equality with negro guests. I have no objection to this, if it suits their taste. But it don't suit mine. And I believe that I have a constitutional legal right to act in accordance with these natural sentiments and select my own social associates...

...any legislation, such as this, which is unmistakably backed by Jewish influence and nothing else, which subserves such a low and selfish and unworthy purpose that it can not have the support of even the best-thinking Jews, to say nothing of non-Jews, whose sense of justice and fair play under normal conditions impels them to work and vote for the removal of Jewish restrictions, legislation which merely evidences the power of the Jewish vote in certain circles, even for unworthy ends, must react like a boomerang upon our own Jewish question. We have always contended that there is no such thing as a Jewish vote, except upon matters of justice and right and honor, that we Jews seek only the rights actually guaranteed us by our citizenship, and that a citizenship so loyal and devoted, as to be above such petty considerations as social ambition and discrimination. Yet this legislation disproves our contention, shows that there are some Jews, at least, who would use the law, and their influence with legislators, to further their selfish desires. And thereby a powerful weapon for evil is put into the hands of our anti-Semitic enemy....

Above all this law sounds a clear and necessary warning to us Jews. It bids us realize that we must clearly define for ourselves our own proper position on matters of legislation or public interest that affect Jews. On the one hand there are many Jews so timid, so fearful of making Rishus, so supine in the matter of the safeguarding of their rights of citizenship, that they are continually protesting that we must say nothing when these rights are endangered, that if some bigots and fanatics would introduce the Bible into public schools, we Jews must hold our tongues and let them do it, if some people would seek to abrogate our treaty with Russia, we Jews must apologize with bated

breath, and assure the world that we really don't ask for that, nor for anything but to be left alone and treated with mere negative kindness and non-persecution. And on the other hand there are some Jews who would invoke the aid of the law to satisfy their own personal ends and petty, selfish social ambitions. What is the right course for all Jews to take? The answer is clear.

We Jews must stand fast upon matters of principle and right and honor. Of this there can be no question. We must be bold and steadfast to insist, at all times and under all conditions, that our rights and privileges as citizens of this nation be recognized and enforced precisely as those of all other citizens, with neither favor nor discrimination. But we must be careful not to invoke the law to settle social matters, to root out prejudice, and to overthrow for us the barriers of mere personal or individual likes and dislikes. The law can never root out anti-Semitism, nor can legal force help in the least degree. Time and education alone can do this. And while this may seem slow and ready to the impatient and unphilosophical among us, none the less it is a fact of life that we all must face. And all we can do, each single one of us, is to so live that because of our individual lives the world shall have acquired a deeper respect for the Jew, and a truer knowledge and appreciation of what Judaism really is and what its actual contribution and message to the world knowledge and world civilization are.

The Civil Rights Law Mr. Marshall in an Open Letter Defends the Position of the American Jewish Committee

To The American Hebrew:

My attention has recently been directed to an article in the last number of the B'nai B'rith News, entitled "Self-Protection or Self-Assertion?" by Rabbi Julian Morgenstern, Ph.D. Had the author been an ordinary anti-Semite, I would have deemed his pronouncement unworthy of serious consideration; but because he is also a rabbi, and a philosopher,

and has asked a number of questions, it may not be out of place to give him the information which he seeks.

The subject of his prolonged disquisition is an act recently passed by the Legislature of New York (Chapter 265 of the Laws of 1913), which amends the Civil Rights Law. He vehemently opposes this legislation, and in his strictures upon it displays, not only a degree of juvenile cynicism, which is to be expected, but racial prejudice, cheap snobbishness, and insufferable egotism, to an extent unusual both in the rabbinate and on the philosophic heights where he dwells.

What is this law, through the enactment of which we, of inferior clay, are permitted a glimpse of this superior soul? It provides that all persons within the jurisdiction of the State of New York shall be entitled to the full and equal accommodations, advantages and privileges of any place of public accommodation, within the meaning of this law, includes any inn, tavern or hotel, whether conducted for the entertainment of transient guests or for the accommodation of those seeking health, recreation or rest, any restaurant, eating-house, public conveyance on land or water, bathhouse, barber-shop, theatre or music hall. The act prohibits the owner of any such place from denying to any person any of the accommodations thereof, and from publishing, circulating, issuing, displaying, posting, or mailing any written or printed communication, notice or advertisement to the effect that any of the accommodations, advantages and privileges of any such place shall be refused, withheld from or denied to any person on account of race, creed or color is unwelcome, objectionable or not acceptable, desired or solicited.

This law was but the enlargement of a statute which had long existed, but was inadequate to meet all of the abuses against which it was aimed. It was grounded on the principle, recognized from time immemorial in countries where the English common law prevails, that the keeper of an inn, or a common carrier, is bound to accommodate all comers. This principle has been one of the boasts of our jurisprudence.

Of late years, however, various hotel keepers have advertised extensively

in the newspapers and through circulars, and by means of other publications, that Jews or Hebrew are not acceptable as guests; that Hebrew patronage is not solicited or desired. In some cases these announcements have been made in the epigrammatic form: "No dogs. No Jews. No consumptives." There have been other variants: "No Jews, no mosquitos." Recently, in *The Outlook*, there appeared an advertisement bearing the strange device: "No Jews. No children." Railroad companies and steamboat companies have issued folders in which appeared advertisements of various hotel-keepers who solicited patronage, interspersed with these choice tid-bits of hatred and contempt.

Thousands of self-respecting Jews, who do not desire to intrude where they are not welcome, many of them having their own summer homes and being nowise dependent on the whims or caprices of public caterers, have nevertheless felt aggrieved by these insulting publications. They have been flaunted in their very faces. They have confronted them in the newspapers and magazines. They have wounded the tender sensibilities of their children, born and reared in this country. They have proclaimed to the general public that the Jew is an inferior being; a thing to be abhorred and despised; a pariah: an outcast. These publications have multiplied year after year, and the most contemptible of boarding-houses have sought to acquire a reputation for exclusiveness by this method of advertising.

To end this outrageous insolence, and to eliminate from the public prints these inciting causes of racial and religious prejudice, this law was enacted, and when Governor Sulzer, who introduced in Congress the resolutions which terminated the Russian treaty, signed it, he declared that he considered it one of the most important contributions to the cause of human rights.

Rabbi Morgenstern is entirely right when he says that this law was unmistakably backed by Jewish influence. It was the same influence which led to the removal from public office in this State of the State Librarian who had resorted to this despicable method of advertising his business as a hotel keeper. It was the same influence which brought about the abrogation of the Russian treaty. It was the same influence which

successfully fought against restrictive immigration laws, and which has struggled for the maintenance of the political and civil rights of the Jew wherever they have been threatened....

This legislation was urged in the interest of the equality of all citizens before the law, and for the purpose of placing upon the statute books of our State a declaration, as emphatic as it could be made, that these manifestations of prejudice, this discharge of poisoned arrows into the hearts of law-abiding citizens, would not be tolerated. The cringing, fawning spirit of the Ghetto, visible in every line of the rabbi-philosopher's attack is naturally incapable of sympathizing with the resentment which one reared in an atmosphere of freedom feels, when confronted by these un-American phenomena.

Whether or not this legislation will accomplish all that it intends, is of no moment. The important purpose underlying it is, to bring about a complete termination of public, notorious and systematic insult, whether directed against a Jew, a Catholic, or any other member of our body politic. To those who are incapable of resenting such treatment, I can supply a choice collection of literature, the perusal of which will enable them to put their professions of superiority to the test.

With visible joy, this critic and others of his ilk, have announced the remarkable discovery that this bill does not go into effect until September 1, when the summer season of the year will be over. He assures us, however, that he is not a lawyer, which accounts for the fact that he did not know that it is practically a uniform rule in New York, that no changes in the substantive law are permitted to go into effect until the first of September succeeding their enactment. His sense of humor, at the expense of the Jews and of the Legislature of New York, has, in this respect at least, been wasted, in spite of his "inescapable suspicion" that the members of the New York Legislature "were really having considerable fun with some of their socially-ambitious and influential constituents."...

...Whatever others may think, it is my firm conviction that, once it becomes known that narrow and bigoted men may not with impunity inflict public insult on any part of our population by invading their racial or religious holy of holies, something which “is worth while” will have been “gained” through this malignant legislation.

Very truly yours,
Louis Marshall
New York, June 15, 1913.



Title page of book that accompanied exposition, 1913.
(Courtesy Klau Library)

*Exposition of the Jews of Many Lands (1913)**

BARBARA KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT

In contrast with those who believed that any kind of national distinction was un-American, Boris D. Bogen, a Russian Jewish immigrant, saw Jewish culture as a resource and used the popular arts of ethnography to redirect the entire project of Americanization.¹

Social workers who fostered appreciation of immigrant cultures during the first decades of the twentieth century hoped that if immigrants were valued they would be treated more fairly and would respond more warmly to Americanization efforts. Liberal intellectuals such as Horace Kallen, who coined the term “cultural pluralism,” and Randolph Bourne, who proposed a “trans-national America,” condemned the position that immigrants should be stripped of their “ancestral endowment.” They proposed instead that cultural differences be respected as part of “American civilization.”² In the paper that he read at the 31st Annual YIVO Conference in 1957, Kallen contrasted emancipation in Europe, which “was particularly intolerant of the Jewish culture complex,” with emancipation in the United States, which “came to be interpreted as an opportunity to enhance and enrich Jewish cultural heritage with new content and new values.”³ These views informed social work among immigrants,

*Parts of this text first appeared in Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s “Imagining Europe: The Popular Arts of American Jewish Ethnography,” a chapter in *Divergent Jewish Cultures: Israel and America*, ed. Deborah Dash Moore and S. Ilan Troen (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 155–191. Permission granted by Yale University Press.

1 Boris D. Bogen, *Born a Jew* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 74.

2 Horace Kallen, “Democracy Versus the Melting Pot,” *Nation* (18 and 25 February 1915): 190–194, 217–220; Randolph Bourne, “Transnational America,” *Atlantic Monthly* 118 (July 1916): 86–97.

3 A summary of Kallen’s paper, “The Antithesis of Emancipation,” appeared in a report of the conference in *News of the YIVO* 64 (March 1957): 1.

nowhere more clearly than in the many homeland exhibitions, festivals, and pageants during the first half of the twentieth century.⁴

As early as 1909, the board of the Jewish Settlement House in Cincinnati was seeking ways to shake the “growing indifference to the good and wholesome old.”⁵ When lectures by renowned speakers and amateur theatricals on Jewish subjects did not do the trick, Bogen mounted a comprehensive plan at the beginning of 1912 “to modify the entire work of the Settlement [sic] with the view of making Jewish culture the central idea of all activities.”⁶ This work culminated in the Exposition of the Jews of Many Lands, a Jewish world’s fair in miniature, inspired by the national pavilions and foreign villages so prominent at international expositions. It opened at the Settlement House in Cincinnati in 1913.

The exposition was an answer to the question, “Should this culture and art be preserved, or should they give way as speedily as possible to Americanism?”⁷ This question animated the pages of *Jewish Charities* during this period:

The value of the foreign culture that the immigrant brings to this country has been extolled by Miss Jane Addams; but she is partial to the immigrant, and has a keen sense for the artistic and picturesque in him, whether of custom or craft, and a fine regret for their neglect and rapid obliteration in America.⁸

Bogen argued that to think of cultural preservation as an impediment to Americanism was to forget that

4 See, for example, Ilana Abramovitch, “America’s Making Exposition and Festival (New York, 1921): Immigrant Gifts on the Altar of America,” doctoral dissertation (New York University, 1996); Allan H. Eaton, *Immigrant Gifts to American Life: Some Experiments in Appreciation of the Contributions of Our Foreign-Born Citizens to American Culture* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1932); and David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

5 “History of the Exhibit,” in *Jews of Many Lands: Exposition Arranged by the Jewish Settlement, January 18 to 26, 1913, Cincinnati, Ohio* (Cincinnati, 1913), 6.

6 *Ibid.*

7 [Editor], “The Month in Brief,” *Jewish Charities* 3, no. 10 (May 1913): 2.

8 [Editor], “The Month in Brief” 2.

besides the advisability of making the parents more modern and putting them, so to say, in a shape lovable to the children, it is also important that the children should be able to realize the strong and positive sides of their parents, not only as much as they have succeeded in modifying themselves in the process of Americanization; but, aside from it, the child should be able to appreciate the merits of their parents as they are.⁹

By focusing on the Jew rather than on Judaism, by making “Jewish culture the central idea of all activities,” and by avoiding a “policy of inflexible Americanization,” Bogen hoped to close the gap between immigrant generations and reduce the divisiveness among Jewish groups.¹⁰

For Jewish leaders in Cincinnati, the first step in immigrants’ adjustment to America was their adjustment to each other. In his introductory words to the program booklet, George Zepin pegged the exposition’s success to its showing

that men may be different in dress but alike in soul-complexion, different in manners but alike in fine heart-throbs. At any rate, it will be our endeavor to show that difference does not mean inferiority. And, if this contributes to make us feel more keenly the brotherhood of Israel, it has done enough.¹¹

Jews were unified, in Bogen’s view, by a common legacy of persecution, a sense of responsibility to co-religionists, and “a high standard of moral integrity of the home.”¹²

The theme of persecution unsettled any easy celebration of the Old World, understood as the countries from which Jews had emigrated. How, for example, could they sing the national anthem of a country that had persecuted them?

9 Boris D. Bogen, “Jews of Many Lands,” *Jewish Charities* 3, no. 10 (May 1913): 5.

10 “History of the Exhibit,” 6; Bogen, *Born a Jew*, 57.

11 George Zepin, “Introductory Words,” in *Jews of Many Lands*, 3. Bogen repeats these words verbatim in “Jews of Many Lands,” 10, and in Boris D. Bogen, *Jewish Philanthropy: An Exposition of Principles and Methods of Jewish Social Service in the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1917), 257; this raises the question of whether he or Zepin is their author.

12 Bogen, “Jews of Many Lands,” 3.

A chorus of boys and girls, clad in the garb of all the nations in which Jews are citizens, sing native songs. Saturday night the chorus sang the Russian hymn “God Save the Czar,” and men and women who had fled to America from Russian persecution hissed. “Why should the Czar be saved?” they asked. “Did he spare us?” So the song was eliminated from the program.¹³

Instead,

The Russian department presented a recital of continuous suffering and oppression. The orthodox rabbi, the soldier, the political prisoner, the revolutionist, the different types of women, represented by immigrants from Russia, reenacted actual episodes of Jewish life in the Dark Russia, with a background of scenery representing the interior of a Russian izba—soldiers’ guard booth and appropriate music and national dances.¹⁴

This was not the shtetl of *Life Is with People* or the Anatevka of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Similarly, many of the domestic objects the immigrants loaned for display commemorated historical events. For example, Miss Numa Kochman, “whose parents were killed in the Kishineff massacre,” loaned “a prayer shawl, the weaver of which was also killed in the massacre.”¹⁵

The Jewish home became the prime site of Jewish cultural revival and intergenerational rapprochement. The great danger in the United States, in Bogen’s view, was “a totally unprecedented breakdown of the Jewish home.”¹⁶ He attributed the worst effects of Americanization not only to external factors—bad influences from the environment—but

13 “Show Jews’ Progress in Exposition,” *The Post*, 20 January 1913, 1.

14 Bogen, “Jews of Many Lands,” 7.

15 “Show Jews’ Progress.” See Steven J. Zipperstein, “Shtetls Here and There,” in *Imagining Russian Jewry: Memory, History, Identity* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 16–39. Zipperstein suggests a shift in orientation to the Old World from a predominantly negative one in the case of first-generation immigrants to a more positive one on the part of later generations. The popular arts of ethnography show how immigrants during the first half of the century negotiated conflicting feelings about the places from which they had come.

16 Bogen, “Jews of Many Lands,” 3.

also to internal ones, most importantly the weakness of the Jewish family to withstand those influences. Americanization had driven a wedge between parents and their children that expressed itself in “estrangement from the old tradition of religious ceremonial life.”¹⁷ This estrangement, for Bogen, was more a matter of Jewish culture than Judaism.¹⁸ To stem the tide, Bogen advocated “a strenuous effort ... in different directions to revive the interest toward Jewish ideals; to return to Jewish culture; to develop an interest toward Jewish history, and to strengthen the weakening ties of the Jews of all the world.”¹⁹ He pointed to the Exposition of the Jews of Many Lands as an example of this “educational crusade.”²⁰

What did the popular arts of ethnography look like on the eve of World War I? From January 18 to 26, 1913, the entire building of the Jewish Settlement House in Cincinnati was “utilized for booths, each one representing the settlement of Jews in another land, and each presided over by men and women in the picturesque costume of that land.”²¹ Twenty-seven countries were represented, “beginning with the United States and ending with Abyssinia.”²² The event brought together four hundred volunteers, fifty-one local Jewish organizations, and twelve national, philanthropic, and educational organizations representing a wide spectrum of the Jewish community, including labor unions, Zionist associations, fraternal organizations, synagogues, schools, and social clubs.²³ This event was to coincide with the convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

17 Bogen, “Jews of Many Lands,” 4.

18 Bogen, “Jews of Many Lands,” 5.

19 Bogen, “Jews of Many Lands,” 5.

20 Bogen, “Jews of Many Lands,” 5.

21 Bogen, *Born a Jew*, 79.

22 Bogen, “Jews of Many Lands,” 6.

23 The numbers vary. In *Jewish Philanthropy*, 253, and “Jews of Many Lands,” 5, Bogen indicates fifty-one organizations. In “Jews of Many Lands,” 6, he indicates forty-five organizations. Perhaps additional organizations joined the venture after the program had gone to press. It was the first of the three sources to appear. For a discussion of this event in the context of Jewish participation in world’s fairs, see Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Exhibiting Jews,” in *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 111–117.

Two modes of cultural competence converged at the exposition—the vernacular and the elevated. The vernacular mode, as manifested in the humble forms of everyday life associated with the Jewish home, expressed the heterogeneity of Jewish culture. The Jewish home of the Old World lent itself to an ethnographic approach, and domestic objects figured prominently in the displays. Everyone was asked to help: “You can assist by loaning curios, costumes, treasures, etc.”²⁴ Over five hundred objects, most of them brought by immigrants from the Old Country, were exhibited.²⁵ The abundance of handmade embroidery and lace was taken as an indication of “the innate love for the beautiful.”²⁶

The elevated mode, which operated in the media of fine and performing arts, was used to present general Jewish themes in a universalizing idiom. Performances included orchestral and choral arrangements of national songs, pageants on the theme of Israel Zangwill’s *Melting Pot*, tableaux, or “living pictures,” on themes such as “Maidens of Many Lands” (including Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, Spanish, Russian, Jewish, and American “maidens”), and Samuel Hirszenberg’s painting *Galut*. While each of the twenty-seven Jewish groups was distinct and even incommensurate with the others, there were several methods for integrating them into a larger whole. The statistical surveys, displayed in the form of charts, made it possible to compare groups. Modular displays, by designating a booth for each country, provided a consistent template for exhibiting comparable differences. Every group was represented—which is to say, included as well as depicted. Choral and dance ensembles performed an eclectic repertoire that represented all the participating groups, unified by choral or choreographic styles and arrangements.

Cincinnati’s Exposition of the Jews of Many Lands was a tour de force of the popular arts of ethnography. It integrated a diverse immigrant community, while affirming its heterogeneous culture, by

24 “First Notice,” Hebrew Union College Broadside Collection, SC 13:1, 3:7, 1904:1.

25 In 1913 Bogen borrowed artifacts from immigrants for the exposition; in January 1944, YIVO would solicit material from the American Jewish public for a permanent Museum of the Old Homes (*Muzey fun di alte heyemen*).

26 Bogen, “Jews of Many Lands,” 6.

involving the participants in the display and performance of their doubly diasporic “heritage.” They had been displaced, first from an ancient homeland and later from the Old World. Immigration had assembled the Diaspora in America. By reviving interest in Jewish culture, this event was supposed to help close the gap between generations, divert youth from the worst influences of tenement life, and integrate Jews into American life. Jewish heterogeneity was both a challenge to Jewish solidarity and, as the exposition would demonstrate, a model for American cultural diversity.

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Manuel Rosenberg, 1941.
(Courtesy the author)

The Rabbi and the Artist: My Family's Cincinnati Legacy (1921)

ANITA ROSENBERG

Famed orator and politician William Jennings Bryan was in Cincinnati on the night of 29 August 1921, having dinner before attending the theater, when my great-uncle Manuel Rosenberg took out his pencil and sketch pad and drew his portrait. Rosenberg was on assignment for the *Cincinnati Post*, and sketching the former secretary of state and three-time presidential candidate was his job.¹

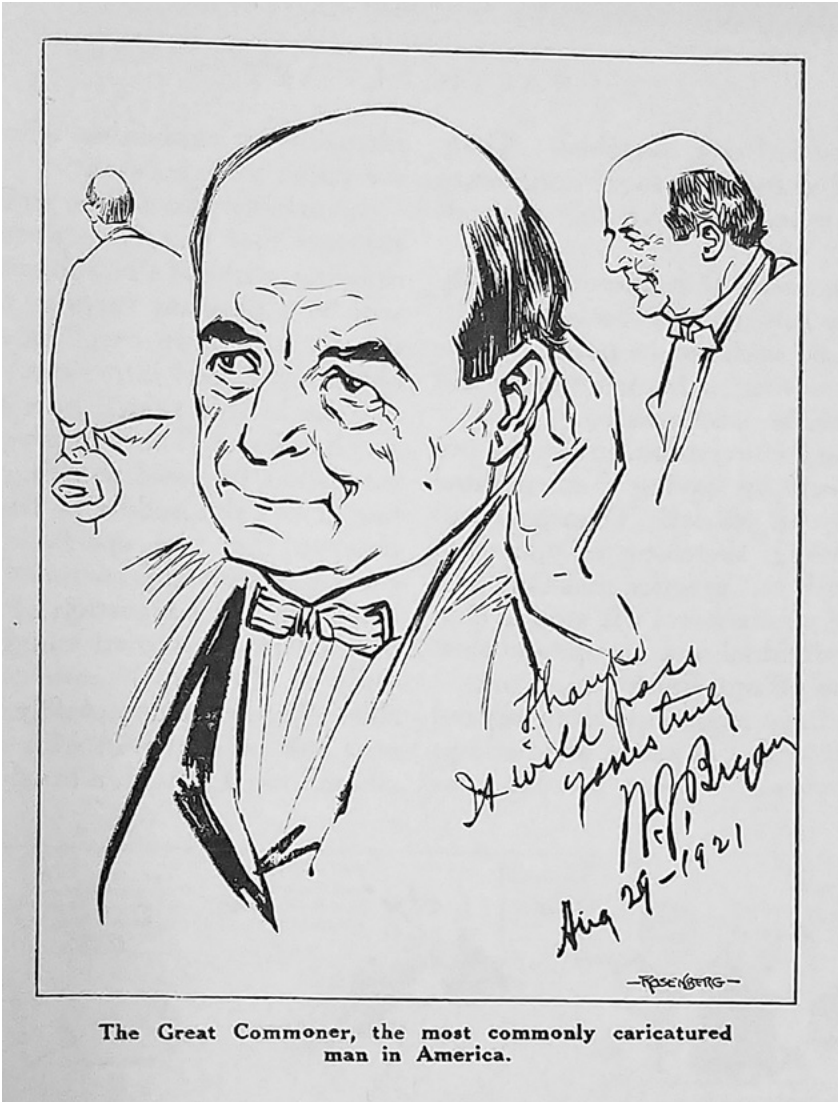
At age twenty-four, Manuel “Rosie” Rosenberg was the paper’s star sketch artist. In his 1922 book, *Manuel Rosenberg’s Course in Newspaper Art*, he described the technical aspects of sketching a visiting celebrity, with wry notes on the subject’s personal peculiarities, including Bryan’s nickname as “The Great Commoner”:

You can readily see that the Great Commoner’s head is easy to caricature. He was dining when I drew the large head, and as I usually stand when sketching, I saw more of his smooth bald head and correspondingly less of his ample double chin. Owing to the din coming in from the hotel lobby, in order to catch the remarks of his guests he would now and then cup his hand to his ear—as suggestively shown in the sketch.²

My great-uncle Manuel Rosenberg was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, on 29 January 1897 to Russian Jewish immigrants. His father, Benjamin Rosenberg (1869–1941), was a cap maker born in Minsk and his mother, Celia Jasin Rosenberg (1873–1958), was born in Kyiv. In 1893 Celia traveled from the Bronx to New Orleans to marry

1 “Convention Gossip and Taft’s Wish,” *Cincinnati Post* (30 August 1921): 2; “After-Dinner Oratory at Cincinnati,” *American Bar Association Journal* VII, no. 10 (October 1921): 605.

2 *The Manuel Rosenberg Course in Newspaper Art* (Cincinnati, self-published: 1922), 189.



Sketch of William Jennings Bryan by Rosenberg, 1921.

(Published in *The Manuel Rosenberg Course in Newspaper Art* [Cincinnati: self-published, 1922])

Benjamin. New Orleans in the late nineteenth century had a vibrant Jewish community, but the city's terrible sanitation during the yellow fever pandemic, when Manuel was a year old, forced the family to move first to Atlanta, where Celia's sister Mary lived, and then to Cincinnati, where her older brother, Joseph, lived.

Rabbi Joseph Jasin was in the 1904 graduating class of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. His father, Israel, was a rabbi in Europe before him, and once the family immigrated, Joseph moved to Cincinnati to become a rabbi as well. Rabbi Jasin was an influential leader in the Jewish community and the first full-time secretary of the Federation of American Zionists from 1908 to 1910.³ His close friendship and correspondence with William Jennings Bryan, among other political and cultural luminaries of his time, are well documented in the American Jewish Archives.⁴

The Rosenbergs were a working-class family living in the Over-the-Rhine immigrant neighborhood near downtown Cincinnati. Rosenberg's two siblings—my grandfather Simon (1899–1967) and Jessie Rosenberg Tyroler (1901–1987)—were both born in Cincinnati. Simon ran the family dry-goods store, named Rosenbergs, with his mother Celia. Jessie married an optometrist and moved to Columbus. Father Benjamin headed for the West Coast—Los Angeles and San Francisco—and fell out of touch with most of the family. The disappearing husband was not uncommon during the turn of the century. Overwhelmed by new possibilities in America, husbands were known to take off for a fresh start in a new city.⁵ Manuel stayed in communication with his father.⁶

3 Michael A. Meyer, *Judaism Within Modernity: Essays on Jewish History and Religion* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001), 363.

4 See, for example, SC-5681 and SC-5682, The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH. Joseph Jasin, "Bryan Through Jewish Eyes—A Personal Tribute," *The Jewish Digest: Tropical America's Jewish Organ* 1, no. 10 (19 March 1926).

5 Reena Sigman Friedman, "'Send Me My Husband Who Is In New York City': Husband Desertion in the American Jewish Immigrant Community, 1900–1926," *Jewish Social Studies* 44, no. 1 (Winter, 1982): 1–18.

6 "Cartoonist on a Trip to Canyon," *The Ogden Standard* (29 Nov. 1918): 12, <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/65454487/> (accessed 27 May 2022).

From the start, Manuel sought out Cincinnati's cultural offerings. Unlike the rest of the more business-minded Rosenbergs, he longed for an artist's life. Manuel, who taught himself to speak five languages, had a talent for drawing and getting his work published. His first cartoon appeared in a New York City publication when he was fifteen. In 1915, he created a page of cartoons for the *London Herald*. He sold newspapers to earn money to attend the Cincinnati Art Academy, where he studied portraiture with portrait artist Frank Duveneck and landscapes with impressionist Lewis Henry Meakin. Manuel's talent and artistic ambitions caught the attention of local Cincinnati realty operator Walter S. Coles, who sent him to the National Academy of Design in New York City, the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts, and to study in Paris. According to the *El Paso Times*, in 1918, when he was only twenty-one, Rosenberg was "a real artist. Not one of those much heard of correspondence school products. His work can be classed with the best, which is all the more remarkable, due to his age."⁷

My great-uncle Manuel Rosenberg became known throughout the country as an illustrator, cartoonist, writer, lecturer, teacher, editor, and publisher. From 1917 to 1930 he was the chief artist for the Scripps-Howard chain of newspapers in addition to overseeing the *Cincinnati Post's* graphic design in the days before printing technology had fully incorporated photography. In 1928 he launched a second career as the founder and publisher of the *Advertiser and Markets of America*, a widely circulated monthly trade publication devoted to the advertising industry in the United States and Canada. Later in his career, Rosenberg was considered one of the foremost authorities on illustration and cartooning and recognized as one of the greatest newspaper sketch artists of his time.⁸ He was the author of four books on art and art instructions, used in many art schools and libraries throughout the world: *Course in*

7 "Ah! Now Watch 'Em Sit Up and Take Notice of Miss 'Beauty and Brains' Out in Phoenix, Ariz.," *El Paso Times* (27 May 1918): 3, <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/82934841/el-paso-times/> (accessed 27 May 2022).

8 "Meet Manuel Rosenberg: Post Sketch Artist, to Visit Many Cincinnati Institutions," *Cincinnati Post* (13 September 1927): 13, <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/101861235/meet-manuel-sept-13-1927/> (accessed 27 May 2022).



Manuel, Celia and Simon Rosenberg, c. 1940s.
(Courtesy the author)

Newspaper Art (1922); *Practical Art by Manuel Rosenberg—A Complete Illustrated Manual for Art Students, Cartoonists Commercial Artists Fashion Artists & Illustrators [sic]* (1924); *Manuel Rosenberg Course in Cartooning and Drawing* (1927); and *The Art of Advertising* (1930), co-written by E. Walker Hartley and published by Harper and Brothers.⁹

During Manuel's thirteen years as chief artist for the *Cincinnati Post*, he carried his drawing board to every corner of the world to cover major news stories. He was one of the first journalists to travel and report back on life in Russia in 1929.¹⁰ He interviewed and sketched almost

9 Isaac H. Schwartz, "Ballyhoo Comes of Age," *Writer's Digest* (May 1929): 39–41, https://archive.org/details/sim_writers-digest_1929-05_9/page/40/mode/2up (accessed 25 May 2022).

10 Anita Rosenberg, "An American correspondent visited Russia and Ukraine in 1929. He

every famous personality of his time, including politicians, soldiers, chorus girls, and criminals. He had audiences with a royal procession of kings, popes, and dictators of early-twentieth-century Europe. He knew and sketched U.S. Presidents William Howard Taft, Woodrow Wilson, Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Theodore Roosevelt, and Dwight D. Eisenhower.¹¹

And on this particular night in 1921, he sketched William Jennings Bryan and got Bryan's autograph on the drawing.¹² As Manuel later recalled:

The classic view of Mr. Bryan, that most preferred by the caricaturist and easiest to draw correctly, is his profile. Incidentally, of the two head sketches that view pleased him the most. The noted statesman was greatly pleased when the orchestra played that lively, delightful Spanish composition, "La Palma"—"The Dove."¹³

I am not sure how well Manuel knew his uncle, Rabbi Jasin. It was not until I started adding to our family tree on Ancestry.com that I even discovered Jasin's role in bringing the Rosenberg family to Cincinnati. The rabbi and the artist were two men with different approaches to life—one creative and the other religious. Yet both made their own unique impact on the cultural and political life of Cincinnati.

Although I was only ten in 1967 when Manuel died of cancer, I remember him as a tall, handsome man with brown, curly hair, wire-rimmed glasses and a warm smile. When he came to visit from New York City with his Parisian wife Lydie Bloch Rosenberg—who spoke in her thick French accent and flaunted flaming red hair—I adored their exotic

had some surprising insights," *The Independent* (31 March 2022), <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/russia-ukraine-american-correspondent-cincinnati-post-b2047457.html> (accessed 25 May 2022).

11 H.B. (Doc) Kerr, "Around the Town," *Akron Beacon Journal* (18 August 1936): 14, <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/81476661/the-akron-beacon-journal/> (accessed 27 May 2022).

12 The Manuel Rosenberg archive is at the Rare Book & Manuscript Library of Columbia University: http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/archival/collections/ldpd_4079587/ (accessed 25 May 2022).

13 *Manuel Rosenberg Course*, 189.

style; they were adventurers. Now that I am older and have studied who they were and the exciting life of travel they led, I understand they are the artists who I have always aspired to be.

And in some ways, by learning who Manuel is, I have come to understand who I am in the world as an artist, photographer, filmmaker, and traveler. My great-grand uncle Rabbi Joseph Jasin may have brought my great-uncle Manuel Rosenberg to Cincinnati, but the city I know, love, and grew up in is the city of Manuel's art, celebrity, and culture. Cincinnati is where the Rosenberg family put down roots, and for that, we are forever grateful.

Anita Rosenberg is an artist, filmmaker, and writer who lives and works in Los Angeles. She is currently working on a book project about her beloved great-uncle Manuel Rosenberg.

PART 1--ENCHAINED



Mrs. Helen Wise Molony, President of the Suffragists of the District of Columbia...

MRS. MOLONY'S PARTY.
November 23, 1912.
THE PROCLAIMED THEORY.
1. March of Militant Suffragettes...
2. Lead line in Hand and Spoon...
3. March--The Militant Suffragettes...



THE MILITANT SUFFRAGETTE AND THE MEDICAL CREWMAN.

THE MILITANT SUFFRAGETTE AND THE MEDICAL CREWMAN.
An Inoffensive Medical Individual to Mrs. J. M. and Mr. J. M. M., on the...



The Suffragettes of Mrs. Helen Wise Molony and others. Alma Brown.

PART 2--UNCHAINED

MRS. MOLONY'S PARTY NO. 2.
JANUARY 25, 1913.

THE WORST WAS GONE

Being a Bad Subject to a Province Brought to the Home Granade.
(LADY, the Militant Suffragette and the Medical Granade's)
Chin, once some other "broad" me,
While I return again...



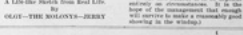
THE MILITANT SUFFRAGETTE AND THE MEDICAL CREWMAN.



THE SUFFRAGETTE AND HER "LEFT."



THE SUFFRAGETTE AND HER "LEFT."



THE SUFFRAGETTE AND HER "LEFT."



THE SUFFRAGETTE AND HER "LEFT."



THE SUFFRAGETTE AND HER "LEFT."



THE SUFFRAGETTE AND HER "LEFT."

Helen Wise Molony Suffrage Broadside, 1921. (Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

Mrs. Molony's Parties: Suffragists Rally from Defeat and Enjoy a Good Laugh

Mrs. Molony's Parties: Suffragists Rally from Defeat and Enjoy a Good Laugh (1921)

KATHERINE T. DURACK

Although typically understood as primarily a white Protestant movement, many of Cincinnati's prominent Jewish citizens joined and led campaigns for woman suffrage. Interest in women's rights within the local Jewish community may have begun as early as 1855, when Ernestine Rose (1810–1892)—a rabbi's atheist daughter—spoke at the National Woman's Rights convention at Smith & Nixon's Hall in downtown Cincinnati.¹ Indeed, in a letter to Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906), Lucy Stone (1818–1893) remarked upon “the large number of Jews” in the city,² and one account of the convention described questions posed to Stone by “Mr. Royce—a Hungarian Jew.”³ A little over a decade later, Rabbi Isaac M. Wise (1819–1900), a founder of Reform

1 Two relatively recent books document Ernestine Rose's extraordinary life: Bonnie S. Anderson's *The Rabbi's Atheist Daughter: Ernestine Rose, International Feminist Pioneer* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 2017) and *Mistress of Herself: Speeches and Letters of Ernestine L. Rose, Early Women's Rights Leader*, ed. Paula Doress-Worters (The Feminist Press at City University of New York, 2008). No official proceedings were separately published for the 1855 national convention in Cincinnati, so accounts of the events are scattered among various local newspapers. Cincinnati's *Type of the Times* newspaper, a reform newspaper, provides a sympathetic account of the proceedings. Issues of this newspaper are quite rare; Ohio History Connection provides access to a number of copies in its collection (<https://ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/p16007coll32/search/searchterm/type%20of%20the%20times/field/title/mode/exact/conn/and/order/search/ad/asc>), including the issue for 27 October 1855, which describes the convention (<https://ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/p16007coll32/id/914/rec/13>).

2 Anderson, *The Rabbi's Atheist Daughter*, 93.

3 “Woman's Rights Convention,” *Cleveland Daily Herald* (19 October 1855).

Judaism, participated in discussions on “free religion” with reformers, including suffragists Caroline Severance (1820–1914), Caroline Dall (1822–1912), and Lucretia Mott (1793–1888)⁴; and it appears that in 1898, the rabbi was scheduled to attend a meeting of the Ohio Woman Suffrage Association with Reverend Anna Howard Shaw (1847–1919).⁵

By 1912, members of Cincinnati’s Jewish community were active leaders of the local, state, and national woman’s movement. The Ohio Men’s League for Woman Suffrage had been formed with Executive Committee members including Daniel Kiefer (c. 1856–1923, Joseph Fels Fund) and Moses Bittenwieser (1862–1939, Hebrew Union College). Gotthard Deutsch (1859–1921, Hebrew Union College) and Irwin M. Krohn Sr. (1869–1948, Krohn-Fechheimer Co.) both served as vice-presidents of the Men’s League.⁶ Sara T. Drukker (1852–1914) had published articles in *American Jewess* about women’s voting and equal rights and had helped organize the pro-woman suffrage Twentieth Century Club in Cincinnati,⁷ and Wise’s daughter, Helen Wise Molony,⁸

4 Free religion. Report of addresses at a meeting held in Boston, 30 May 1867.

<https://archive.org/details/freereligionrepo00free/page/n11/mode/2up>.

5 “Dr. Wise and the Rev. Anna Shaw Will Address Woman Suffrage Convention To-Day,” *Cincinnati Enquirer* (20 October 1898): 8.

6 Letter from William Littleford to Mrs. [Martha] McClelland Brown, 12 November 1913, S-147: Martha McClellan Brown Papers, Wright State University. https://core-scholar.libraries.wright.edu/special_ms147_correspondence/19/.

7 Issues of *American Jewess* are available online from the Jewish Women’s Archive at the University of Michigan (<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/a/amjewess/>). “Sarah Drukker,” “Sara T. Drukker,” and “Sarah T. Drukker” authored several articles on women’s rights. Upon her death, Sara T. Drukker’s daughters assembled her writings into a memorial collection, “A Literary Find,” available online at HathiTrust digital library (<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t9571wd17>). In his “appreciation,” George M. Hammel writes of Drukker’s commitment to women’s equality and credits her leadership of two Cincinnati suffrage organizations, the Twentieth Century Club and the Susan B. Anthony Club.

8 Helen Wise Molony is among the many suffragists whose lives are documented in brief articles published in the crowdsourced database, *The Online Biographical Dictionary of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the United States* (<https://documents.alexanderstreet.com/VOTESforWOMEN>). Read about Mrs. Molony at <https://documents.alexanderstreet.com/d/1010596326>.

was among the leaders of Cincinnati's Susan B. Anthony Club.

This delightful piece of ephemera from the first decades of the twentieth century provides a rare glimpse into the temperament and activities of some Cincinnati suffragists. The document describes two "parties," one held before and the other after U.S. women gained equal voting rights. Both were apparently organized by Helen Wise Molony for her fellow activists, including her daughter and Wise's granddaughter, Iphigene Molony Bettman ("Iph") and Iphigene's husband, "Cap" Gilbert Bettman.

By 29 November 1912, when Mrs. Molony held her first party and flag-bearing suffragists paraded through Cincinnati streets, a special election for updating the Ohio state constitution had been decided, and woman suffrage had been defeated. Unrevised since 1850, changes to the state constitution were long overdue: Among other anachronisms, it still described voters as "white and male," even though the Fifteenth Amendment had enfranchised Black men after ratification in 1870. Suffragists proposed eliminating the terms "white" and "male" in a single amendment, enabling voters to align state and federal law on the question of race and simultaneously grant women equal voting rights with one stroke of a pen on a ballot. Alarmed by canvasses that suggested suffragists were likely to prevail in 1912 and concerned that a new bloc of women voters would champion Prohibition, the Ohio liquor lobby "suddenly ... became deeply solicitous for the rights of the negro" and succeeded in separating "white" from "male" into two separate amendments to be placed before voters "in the hope of entirely alienating the Negro vote from support of the suffrage amendment."⁹ Thanks in large part to a massive campaign coordinated and paid for by breweries, distilleries, bars, and related establishments, both amendments failed, leaving Black voting rights unacknowledged and women disenfranchised.

By 30 January 1921, the date of "Mrs. Molony's Party No. 2," the situation had changed dramatically. Despite national campaigns to defeat and overturn the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Amendments, both

9 Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics: The Inner Story of the Suffrage Movement* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923), 199, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015002194622?urlappend=%3Bseq=215>.

Prohibition and woman suffrage were adopted nationwide. The “dry” Eighteenth Amendment had been in effect for just over a year, and women nationwide had been “unchained” at last by the Nineteenth Amendment after 26 August 1920.¹⁰ For the liquor lobby and anti-suffragists, “the worst” had indeed come to pass.

This broadside documenting Molony’s parties is special for many reasons: It includes rare photos of Helen Wise Molony and Cincinnati suffragists protesting in the city, it mentions suffragists’ participation in the 1920 census, and it is rich with cultural and literary allusions. The house pictured may be on the Isaac M. Wise farm, where Molony and her husband lived for many years.¹¹ From my perspective, the document’s singular quality is that descriptions of Molony’s “parties” put firmly to rest the persistent belief that suffragists—and feminists in general—are mirthless. The women characterized themselves humorously: Helen Wise Molony (“Mrs. J. M.”) is “the militant suffragette,” the “dumpy ... bumpy,” “squatty” suffragette; and Dr. Sarah Siewers (“Dr. S.M.S.”) is the “medical grenadier,” “altitudinous,” “long-shanked,” and “perpendicular.” Together they are “Don Quixote” and “Sancho Panza,” a “Punch and Judy pair” aided by cohorts such as “Jane Anna Spankhurts Bernheim (possibly alluding to Jane Addams, Anna Howard Shaw, and Emmeline and Sylvia Pankhurst, internationally known reformers who had campaigned in Cincinnati). Foes are similarly memorialized: “Postmaster General Hiccough” may be the Postmaster General whom suffragists in 1915 had asked for a ruling on postal laws prohibiting circulating “indecent matter,” as they wished to create a mailing for supporters that quoted the actual text (as opposed to the cleaned-up version in the Congressional Record) of a “vulgar” anti-suffrage speech given by Cincinnati’s “foul-mouthed” Congressman Stanley Bowdle in the House of Representatives.¹²

10 U.S. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby certified the Nineteenth Amendment on 26 August 1920, marking its official adoption into the U.S. Constitution. August 26 was designated as “Women’s Equality Day” in 1971.

11 “GOP Stalwart, Columnist, Iphigene Bettman Dies,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer* (10 February 1978): C3.

12 “Suffragists: Ask Postal Department Whether Bowdle’s Speech Is Mailable,” *The*

Katherine Durack, PhD, is the originator of The Genius of Liberty, a series of six-minute suffrage stories about Ohio and the fight for woman suffrage, created in partnership with Cincinnati's Mercantile Library. She served as Ohio's representative on the National Board for the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Association, as a member of the 2020 Women's Vote Centennial Initiative task force, and a contributor to the National Votes for Women Trail. Durack has consulted with arts, education, and cultural organizations on Ohio's suffrage history.

Cincinnati Enquirer (26 January 1915): 4; "Bowdle's Speech," *The Cincinnati Enquirer* (17 January 1915): 7. "Thousands of Postmasters: May Have To Censor Bowdle's Speech Against Suffrage," *The Cincinnati Enquirer* (29 January 1915): 3. See also "Chivalry in Congress," *The New Republic* vol. 1, no. 12 (23 January 1915): 8–9.



Robert S. Marx, 1921.
(Courtesy Library of Congress)

“The Patriotism of the American Jew”: Judge Robert S. Marx’s Memorial Day Address

*“The Patriotism of
the American Jew”:
Judge Robert S. Marx’s
Memorial Day Address
(1927)*

MARK A. RAIDER

Judge Robert S. Marx (1889–1960) of Cincinnati, Ohio, was a highly respected jurist, a champion of disabled American veterans, a dedicated Jewish communal leader, and a Democratic party activist of national stature. A native son of the Queen City who graduated from Walnut Hills High School and the University of Cincinnati’s College of Law (he was captain of the university’s football team and a leading member of the debate team), Marx passed the Ohio bar exam in 1910 and shortly thereafter began his law career. During World War I, he served as a captain with the American Expeditionary Forces on the Western front, where he was seriously injured and reported killed. He left a record of his harrowing experience in a questionnaire for a study by the American Jewish Committee of Jewish soldiers:

Severely wounded Nov. 10, 1918, in attack upon Baalon in Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Was acting as Operations Officer of 357th Infantry, having been in front line of attack for 74 continuous days without relief except 7 days changing sectors. On the night of Nov. 9–10, crossed the Meuse River at Sassay marching miles on nights so cold that our water froze in the canteen. Was ordered to attack the town of Baalon immediately. Third Bat. 357th Inf. having lost all officers above the grade of first lieutenant, I was ordered to take command of this, and press attack on Baalon. When I reached Battery headquarters, found the men digging in and gave directions and orders for an immediate advance. After a brief period the advance commenced and was met with machine gun

fire from both flanks and artillery fire from four sides. While leading my Battery forward, a high explosive shell landed close by, killing my intelligence officer and wounding me in some 14 places. I was carried to 5th Division First Aid Station at Monsay, reaching there about 9 A.M., Nov. 10, 1918; was sent in ambulance to Mobile Hospital #6 at Barennes near Grandpre, and was operated on in a tent by Dr. J.P. Wall about 11:00 P.M., Nov. 11, 1918. On Nov. 18 was sent to A.R.C. N.H. #3, Paris, and finally transferred to U.S.A. G.H. #11, Cape May, from which place I was discharged.¹

After the war, Marx was awarded the Purple Heart, the Distinguished Service Cross, and the Verdun Medal for bravery and valor in battle. In 1919, he helped to organize a reunion of a hundred fellow disabled Great War veterans for a Christmas Day dinner. The gathering convened at downtown Cincinnati's elegant Sinton Hotel. Conversation at the event turned to the everyday challenges faced by the more than 200,000 injured servicemen who, like Marx, found the country ill-prepared to address and support their needs after the war—particularly vocational training, assistance finding civilian employment, and health care. A few months later, Marx led the effort to establish the Disabled American Veterans of the World War (DAVWW). (The organization dropped the "WW" in the 1930s.)

In 1919, Marx was appointed a judge of the Superior Court of Ohio; he was the youngest person to serve in this capacity until that time (1919–1926). Bucking Cincinnati's conservative political establishment, Marx also became highly visible in his role as a torchbearer in the 1920 presidential campaign of Governor James M. Cox (1870–1957), the Democratic standard bearer, and his vice-presidential nominee, Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882–1945). As Marx traveled with Cox and Roosevelt across the country, he argued the case for the Democratic ticket and recruited veterans to join the DAVWW. In due course, the organization

1 Quoted in Paul LaRue, "Captain Robert S. Marx: Decorated World War I Soldier and Founder of the Disabled American Veterans," *Teaching American History/Ohio History Connection*, 19 October 2017, <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/blog/world-war-i-and-the-founding-of-the-disabled-american-veterans/> (accessed 21 June 2022).

rallied more than 17,000 veterans in hundreds of local clubs and societies. The following year, at a meeting of one thousand disabled veterans in Detroit, Marx was elected the DAVWW's first national commander. Under his leadership, the organization expanded rapidly and lobbied the U.S. Congress to consolidate three agencies charged with the federal government's administration of veterans affairs and benefits—the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Pensions, the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, and the Veterans Bureau—all of which were eventually combined in a reconstituted Veterans Bureau.

In the 1920s, Marx garnered a national reputation as a first-tier trial attorney with a flair for the dramatic. For example, when confronted with an antisemitic comment in the midst of a case involving a Jewish client, he reportedly removed his dress shirt, showed the jury his scars from World War I, and commented that nobody asked in battle if he was a Jew or a gentile—leaving the jury in tears. Among Marx's most high-profile cases was the famous *Sapiro v. Ford* lawsuit (1925–27), an effort to recover \$1 million for libel owing to Henry Ford's (1863–1947) publication of a series of defamatory antisemitic articles in the Ford-owned *Dearborn Independent*.² Together with Detroit attorney William H. Gallagher (1884–1981), Marx served as co-counsel for the plaintiff, Aaron L. Sapiro (1884–1959), a Chicago-based labor activist and lawyer with whom he had gone into practice a year earlier.

Sapiro's case, presided over by Judge Fred M. Raymond (1876–1946) of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, was anchored in two distinct types of claims—defaming Sapiro personally and defaming him as a member of a “class,” i.e., the Jews. Reporting on the trial as it unfolded, the *New York Times* noted that the *Dearborn Independent* accused Sapiro “of being a cheat, a faker and a fraud” and included “animadversions against the Jewish people.”³ Specifically, the *Independent* labeled Sapiro a “leader of a ‘Jewish conspiracy’” bent on destroying American society⁴ and

2 For a useful overview, see Leo P. Ribuffo, “Henry Ford and The International Jew,” *American Jewish History* 69, no. 4 (June 1980): 437–477.

3 Quoted in “Ford Will Testify as Sapiro Witness; Six Women on Jury,” *New York Times* (16 March 1927): 3.

4 Quoted in “All Ready to Start Ford-Sapiro Trial,” *New York Times* (14 March 1927): 1.

asserted he “and his associates were working for selfish ends... with the view of delivering the farmers into the ‘grip’ of Jewish bankers.”⁵ In the event, Judge Raymond initially imposed restrictions on evidence that “did not contain Sapiro’s name,” and subsequently, at least in part due to the absence of laws concerning group libel in all but seven states, including Michigan, threw out Sapiro’s group libel claim.⁶

Though Sapiro’s legal action was limited to recovery of damages for injury specific to him, Marx and Gallagher did not flinch from attacking Ford and the *Dearborn Independent* in the public square. The larger cultural-political battle surrounding the case, they reasoned, was inextricably linked to Ford’s persistent campaign to deceive and beguile a sizable swath of the American public by dint of antisemitic fantasies. What the court categorized as “solely slander on the Jewish race”—i.e., the *Independent’s* assertions of “the Jewish organization,” “the Jewish movement on American agriculture,” and “the Jewish promoters and Oriental financiers”—drew directly from the notorious literary hoax *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.⁷ Against the backdrop of scores of sensational titles—“The International Jew: The World’s Problem” (1920), “Jewish Jazz—Moron Music—Becomes Our National Music” (1921), “Aspects of Jewish Power in the United States” (1922), “How the Jews Gained American Liquor Control” (1922), “Jews Grab Sesqui-Centennial Plums: Official List Reveals Identity of Concessionaires at Philadelphia’s Approaching Exhibition; Light Thrown on Hitherto Mysterious Happenings” (1926), and others—the newspaper explicitly targeted Sapiro as “a member of an organization of Jews international in scope ... [seeking] to control and dominate not merely the government and people of this country but the governments and peoples of all the civilized world.”⁸ “Don’t think,” Marx commented in a public interview, “we’re dropping our attempt to get the ‘Jewish issue’ in this suit.”⁹

5 Quoted in “Ford Will Testify as Sapiro Witness,” 3.

6 Quoted from “Ford Wins Ruling Barring Race Issue from Sapiro Suit,” *New York Times* (17 March 1927): 14.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 “Deletion of 54 Allegations in Sapiro Complaint Sharpens Focus of Jewish Issue,

In the spring of 1927, after Judge Raymond declared a mistrial in the *Sapiro v. Ford* case and a new trial was set, Louis Marshall (1856–1929), the famous New York lawyer and American Jewish Committee president, engineered a conclusion to the affair that both advanced and exceeded Gallagher and Marx’s extra-legal strategy. Recognizing the limitations of the law and alert to the magnitude of Ford’s public relations debacle, Marshall persuaded Ford to sign and release a public statement in which he expressed “mortification to discover that the *Dearborn Independent* was ‘resurrecting exploded fictions’ about Jews and ‘giving currency to the so-called *Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion*,’ which, Ford’s statement said, ‘have been demonstrated, as I learn, to be gross forgeries.... I deem it my duty as an honorable man ... to make amends for the wrong done to the Jews ... by asking their forgiveness....’”¹⁰ Though Ford essentially abandoned his defense with his apology—agreeing to destroy thousands of copies of *The International Jew* and ultimately shuttering the *Independent*—the public statement did not fully resolve matters. Indeed, as Robert S. Rifkind points out, Sapiro and Herman Bernstein (1876–1935), an American journalist who also filed a lawsuit against Ford, could have pressed on with their libel claims—their respective cases were dismissed only *after* Ford’s representatives negotiated settlement agreements with the plaintiffs, including provisions for damages. In sum, the true significance of Ford’s “confession, retraction, and apology,” Rifkind observes, is that it achieved what the lawsuits could not, namely, it “carried the impressive force of a world-famous man—a force that twelve anonymous jurors, easily dismissed as misled by lawyers’ wiles, could never have had.”¹¹

1927 was a pivotal year in Marx’s career. Even as the *Sapiro v. Ford* case was coming to a climax—Marx comments on it in the Memorial Day Address reprinted below—fellow Cincinnati and Democratic activist Hugh L. Nichols (1865–1942), who formerly served as Ohio’s lieutenant governor (1911–1913) and chief justice of the Ohio Supreme Court (1913–1920), recruited Marx to join himself, Frank E. Wood

Gallagher States,” *Jewish Daily Bulletin* (25 March 1927): 1.

10 Quoted from Robert S. Rifkind, “Confronting Antisemitism in America: Louis Marshall and Henry Ford,” *American Jewish History* 94, nos. 1/2 (March–June 2008): 84.

11 *Ibid.*, 90.

(1882–1949), and Gustavus A. Ginter (1881–1971) and establish the Cincinnati law firm Nichols, Wood, Marx and Ginter. Marx remained a senior partner in the firm until his death. In 1938, he also established the Detroit firm Marx, Levi, Thill and Wiseman.

Marx's varied legal undertakings, part-time teaching positions in the University of Cincinnati College of Law and Xavier University Law School, and publications concerning compulsory automobile and compensation insurance, antitrust legislation, banking reform, and taxation would earn him high acclaim in academic and legal circles. He helped to argue and/or was on the brief of twenty-two cases that came before the U.S. Supreme Court and was appointed a fellow of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers and a fellow of the American Bar Foundation in 1955 and 1956, respectively. As a leader of the Democratic Party in Ohio, a close adviser of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and a friend of Eleanor Roosevelt (1884–1962), he not only played a key role in Roosevelt's 1932, 1936, 1940, and 1944 presidential campaigns but also as a New Dealer of national prominence. With the emergency federal bank holiday of 1933, intended to restore the public's confidence in the nation's financial institutions, FDR appointed him, together with his partner Wood, counsel for the receivership of First National Bank of Detroit; they secured a \$35 million judgment, including interest, against the corporation's stockholders for all the bank's depositors. A lifelong bachelor, Marx established the Robert S. Marx Charitable Foundation and Trust, which provided substantial gifts to Disabled American Veterans, the Isaac M. Wise Center (Cincinnati, Ohio), Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park's Robert S. Marx Theatre, the University of Cincinnati's Robert S. Marx Law Library, and other communal and civic institutions.

A full sketch of Marx's career after the 1930s goes beyond the scope of this introductory note. What we catch a glimpse of here, however, is a thirty-nine-year-old man in his prime—one whose career and reputation as a respected and talented American jurist, a Cincinnati luminary, and a dedicated Jewish communal leader were on an upward trajectory. No stranger to the rough-and-tumble of the American public arena, Marx, as evidenced in his address, used his perch as a leading American Jewish voice and public citizen to advocate for the future of liberal democracy, religious tolerance, and minority rights in America.

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Robert S. Marx, "Memorial Day Address" (1927)¹²

Mr. President and friends, throughout the length and breadth of this land on this Memorial Day,¹³ there will be parades of fast-thinning ranks

12 Robert S. Marx Papers, 1904–1974, MSS-903, Folder: "Miscellaneous Speeches," Cincinnati History Library and Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio. It appears likely that Marx gave the address reprinted here in 1927. Although the archival document includes a handwritten comment reading "Prob. Memorial Day 1928," Marx himself states "it is nearly a decade since the war ended" (see page 89 below). Meanwhile, the *Ohio Jewish Chronicle*, reporting on a regional B'nai B'rith convention held in Columbus, Ohio in May 1927, carries a front-page headline recording "Memorial Day Address Was Delivered by Judge Robert S. Marx" and noting "his talk was considered one of the outstanding features of the convention." See: "Columbus Chosen for 1928 Convention of District Number 2 of the B'nai B'rith," *Ohio Jewish Chronicle*, 3 June 1927, 1. Special thanks to Sarah Staples, Helen Steiner Rice Archivist at the Cincinnati History Library and Archives, for invaluable assistance procuring the text of Marx's address. I am also grateful to Benjamin Hufbauer, Sally Hufbauer, and Robert S. Rifkind for their useful comments and suggestions on an earlier draft of this piece.

13 Memorial Day, originally known as Decoration Day, was first observed in 1868 to honor soldiers killed in the American Civil War. In the decades that spanned the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many cities and states declared Memorial Day a legal holiday. After World War I, it became widely celebrated as a national holiday. In 1971, the U.S. Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act which standardized the last Monday of May as Memorial Day.

of soldiers who served in the Civil War, and of their fast-ageing comrades of the Spanish-American War, and of their youthful comrades of the World War.¹⁴ And along the streets where these parades pass there will be many a sad and many a proud mother—many a Jewish mother. And as these mothers look upon the boys marching by they may well turn to their neighbors, and some of them may say with pride, “I had a son in the army, too.” And if their neighbor should chance to ask, “And is he in the parade,” that mother would reply, “No, he didn’t come back,” as the tears might well blur her vision, while the band blares on.

Today those of us who have come back meet to rededicate ourselves to the great principles for which those who did not come back gave all that they were or hoped to be. In the words of [James Russell] Lowell:¹⁵

Many loved Truth, and lavished life’s best oil
 Amid the dust of books to find her,
 Content at last, for guerdon of their toil,
 With the case mantle she hath left behind her.
 Many in sad faith sought for her,
 Many with crossed hands sighed for her;
 But these, our brothers, fought for her,
 At life’s dear peril wrought for her,
 So loved her that they died for her,
 Tasting the raptured fleetness
 Of her divine completeness:
 Their higher instinct knew
 Those love her best who to themselves are true,
 And what they dare to dream of, dare to do;...¹⁶

14 The reference is to the American Civil War (1861–1865), the Spanish-American War (1868), and World War I (1914–1918).

15 James Russell Lowell (1819–1891), an American Romantic poet and Harvard professor of languages, was associated with the New England fireside poets. An active abolitionist, Lowell was editor of *Atlantic Monthly* and served as U.S. ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain (1877–1880) and the Court of St. James’s (1880–1885).

16 The stanzas derive from Lowell’s “Ode Recited at the Harvard Commemoration” (1865).

And so doing these men have died for great principles. And it seems to me most fitting that we should pause this morning to recall those principles in summary for which these soldiers have died from the time this country was born.

I shall not dwell at length upon them, but at a time such as we I hope happily are coming through, when there has been a wave of hysteria, a wave of intolerance, a wave of fanaticism destructive of the rights of mankind, destructive of liberty of conscience, destructive of the liberty of private worship, destructive of the liberty of science to teach the truth; it is well to recall that in the Declaration of Independence the men who founded this country said that they held these truths to be self-evident, “that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights,” and that among these are “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;” and when the term “liberty” was so used, liberty of conscience, liberty of private worship, liberty of thought was meant, as well as liberty of person and protection for property.¹⁷ And so, in the Preamble of our Constitution we find that these men said, “We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union,” yes, and to “establish justice, to insure domestic tranquility, promote the general welfare,” but above all, “to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity do ordain and establish the Constitution of the United States,” which after all, and although it may be trite to repeat it, is indeed a bulwark of our liberties, the guarantee of our freedom and a document well worth shedding the blood that has been shed in its defense.¹⁸

And when more than a hundred years ago our forebears in Ohio founded the state of Ohio, they wrote these immortal words into the constitution of this state in 1802,¹⁹ that “all men have a natural and indefeasible

17 Quoted from the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

18 Quoted from the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States.

19 The reference is to the 1802 constitution codifying the philosophical, legal, and administrative structure for the newly formed State of Ohio, which officially entered the Union in 1803 as the seventeenth state. Ohio’s state constitution was subsequently revised in 1851, 1873, and 1912.

right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of conscience”; that no human authority can in any case whatever control or interfere with “the rights of conscience,” that no man “shall be compelled to attend, erect, or support any place of worship or maintain any ministry against his consent.” And “no preference shall ever be given by law to any religious society or mode of worship,” and “no religious test shall be required as a qualification” to any office of trust or profit, but “religion, morality, and knowledge ... being [essentially necessary] to good government” and the happiness of mankind, “schools and the means of instruction” shall forever be encouraged by legislative provision not inconsistent with “the rights of conscience.”²⁰

So reads the constitution of this country; so reads the constitution of this state, these years and generations ago, and throughout the time that has run since then men have been privileged to spend their blood in defense of those fundamental principles of life, liberty and justice, and if we Jews have stood in America from the beginning, firm in our stand for the separation of church and state, if we have opposed the attempt to unite the church to the school by the enforced reading of the Bible in public schools, if we have stood against laws such as the Tennessee law²¹ which forbids the free teaching of the truths of science, if we have stood against the attempt to shackle freedom, to shackle liberty, to

20 Quoted from Constitution of the State of Ohio, Article 1: Bill of Rights, Paragraph 7: “Rights of conscience; education; the necessity of religion and knowledge.”

21 The reference is to Tennessee’s Butler Act, a 1925 law introduced by John Washington Butler (1875–1952) to the Tennessee state legislature that forbade public school teachers from “teach[ing] any theory that denies the Story of Creation of man as taught in the Bible and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals.” (The law was not repealed until 1967.) In 1925, the American Civil Liberties Union supported a challenge to the law by John T. Scopes (1900–1970), a high school science teacher, who was indicted for teaching Charles Darwin’s (1809–1882) theory of evolution. The trial that followed (*State of Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes*, also known as the “Monkey Trial”) garnered national and international attention, in part owing to Clarence Darrow (1857–1938) and William Jennings Bryan (1860–1925), high-profile figures who acted as the defense and prosecuting lawyers, respectively. Notwithstanding Scopes’s conviction, the trial proved to be a significant flash point in the campaign to teach science in American public schools.

shackle thought, and to shackle the right of mankind to worship as he chooses, we have simply stood by the constitution of our country and of our state and we have a right to stand by that document and by the flag that stands before you, because from the days of the Revolutionary War Jewish blood and Jewish treasure has mingled side by side with that of all other elements of our great and diverse population. All of you know the story of the part played by the Jews in the Revolutionary War;²² you know that there were many Jewish soldiers among the army of [George] Washington;²³ you know that there were a number of high ranking officers, three lieutenant-colonels, a number of majors and many privates who served in the Revolutionary army;²⁴ all of you know the story of Haym Solomon²⁵ who pledged his faith and his fortune to finance the Revolutionary War and without whose aid that might never have succeeded. All of you know the stirring story of the heroism of the Jewish soldiers during the Civil War, both upon the North and upon

22 At the time of the American Revolution, the Jewish population in the British colonies was estimated to be between 1,000 and 2,500 individuals. Scholars generally agree that a minority of Jews were loyalists and most sided with the patriots. Approximately 100 Jews fought in the American Revolution with the Continental Army.

23 George Washington (1732–1799), American military officer, commander of the Continental Army, and founding father and first president of the United States (1789–1797).

24 Marx is apparently referring to figures like Lieutenant Colonel David S. Franks (1740–1793), an aide-de-camp to General Benedict Arnold (1740–1781), and Lieutenant Colonel Solomon Bush (1753–1795), adjutant general of the Pennsylvania militia.

25 Haym Solomon (1740–1785), a Polish-born financial broker who in 1775 immigrated to New York, sympathized with the American Revolutionary cause. Arrested in 1776 and 1778 by the British for espionage, he escaped captivity both times. Together with Robert Morris, an English-born merchant and founding father of the United States, Solomon was a prime financier of the Continental Army and later the newly formed U.S. government. Sadly, the U.S. government did not recognize the Continental and national debt Solomon assumed, and he died impoverished.

the South.²⁶ You know that Judah P. Benjamin²⁷ was the Secretary of the Southern States during the war.

Many of you may recall that when a leave of absence was asked by some of the Jewish soldiers in one of the Confederate Divisions for attendance upon the Holiday services, that request was denied solely because there were so many Jewish soldiers in the Division that the Commanding General said it would disrupt the forces if the Holiday was granted.²⁸

Most of you know the story of Major-General [Frederick] Knefler²⁹ and

26 In the 1860s the Jewish population in the United States was estimated at 150,000, accounting for less than 0.5 percent of the total American population (31 million). Most Jews lived in the North and supported the Union; roughly 25,000 Jews lived in the South and supported the Confederacy. Between 8,000 and 10,000 Jews fought in the Civil War, including a sizable number of recent immigrants from Central Europe. More than fifty Jews attained the rank of officer in the Union and Confederate armies.

27 Born to a Sephardic Jewish family in the Caribbean, Judah P. Benjamin (1811–1884) was an antebellum U.S. senator from Louisiana who, following the outbreak of the Civil War (1861–1865), served as attorney general, secretary of war, and secretary of state of the Confederate States of America. At the end of the war, he fled to England.

28 Shortly after the victory of the Confederate forces over the Union forces at the First Battle of Bull Run (21 July 1861), the first major battle of the American Civil War, Maximilian J. Michelbacher (1811–1879), of Richmond, Virginia, sent General Robert E. Lee (1807–1870) a request in anticipation of the upcoming holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Noting that “the case is important to a class of citizens, being Israelites, who take the greatest interest in the welfare of this confederacy,” Michelbacher requested a temporary leave for Jewish soldiers for “ten days from the 5th to the 14th of September” to observe “the 10 days Penitence & Prayer.” Lee politely but firmly denied the request, stating: “It would give me great pleasure to Comply with a request so earnestly urged by you; & which I know would be so highly appreciated by that Class of our Soldiers. But the necessities of War admit of no relaxation of the efforts requisite for its Success, nor can it be known on what day the presence of every man may not be required. I feel assured that neither you or any member of the Jewish Congregation would wish to jeopardize a Cause you have so much at heart by the withdrawal even for a Season of a portion of its defenders. I cannot therefore grant the general furlough you desire, but must leave to individuals to make their own application to their Several Commanders.” Quoted in *Personal Reminiscences of General Robert E. Lee*, ed. J. William Jones, reprint (New York: Forge, 2003), 400–401.

29 Frederick Knefler (Knoepfler), a Hungarian Jewish immigrant, fled with his family

Commodore [Uriah Phillips] Levy³⁰ who served upon the northern side.

The Spanish-American War is fresh in the memory of the older men present, and those of us my age can still faintly recall it. You know the story of Rear-Admiral [Adolph] Marix³¹ in that war; you know that

to the United States following the defeat in 1848–1849 of the Hungarian revolutionary forces. After an initial stay in New York, the Knefler family resettled in Indianapolis, Indiana, where Frederick studied law. In 1861, following the outbreak of the Civil War, he was appointed assistant to Adjutant General Lew Wallace (1827–1905) and eventually became captain of 11th Indiana Infantry Regiment. When Wallace was elevated to brigadier general, he appointed Knefler as his assistant adjutant general, in which capacity Knefler fought at the Battle of Shiloh. In 1862, Indiana Governor Oliver Morton (1823–1877) appointed Knefler colonel of the 79th Indiana Infantry Regiment, and he subsequently fought in the battles of Stones River, Chickamauga, and Missionary Ridge, where his leadership was critical to repelling the Confederate army. He also played a central role commanding the regiment in the battles of Pickett's Mill, Peach Tree Creek, Jonesboro, and Lovejoy's Station, and later helped to defeat the Confederate army at the battles of Franklin and Nashville. In 1866, the U.S. Senate approved President Andrew Johnson's nomination of Knefler as brevet brigadier general.

30 Despite a pervasive institutional culture of antisemitism, Uriah Phillips Levy (1792–1862) rose through the ranks of the U.S. Navy to become its first Jewish commodore. During the War of 1812, Levy, a sailing master on the USS *Argus*, participated in the seizure of nearly two dozen British ships. In 1813, the *Argus* crew was captured by the British and imprisoned for sixteen months. In 1817, Levy was elevated to the rank of second master of the USS *Franklin*. He was promoted to master commandant and captain in 1837 and 1844, respectively. In 1850, he played a leading role in the abolition of the practice of flogging in the U.S. Navy. In 1857, Levy was dismissed from service but challenged the decision in a court of inquiry and was reinstated as commodore of the U.S. Navy's Mediterranean fleet. Having earned a fortune by investing in New York real estate, Levy deployed his wealth to support American Jewish communal institutions, commission a statue of Thomas Jefferson that today stands in the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol, and purchase and restore Jefferson's plantation estate, Monticello (Charlottesville, Virginia).

31 A Central European immigrant, Adolph Marx (1848–1919) was the first Jewish graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. He rose through the navy's ranks and served as ensign on the USS *Congress* (1869), master on the USS *Canandaigua* (1870), and thereafter lieutenant on various missions overseas. Promoted to lieutenant commander, he was assigned to the USS *Minnesota* (1893), the USS *Maine* (1895), and the USS *Scorpion* (1898), in which capacity he earned distinction for bravery in the Second and Third Battles of Manzanillo. In 1899, he was elevated to the rank of commander and thereafter vice admiral.

under Colonel [Theodore] Roosevelt³² there were Jewish Rough Riders.³³

But strange as it may seem, although the World War³⁴ is far more recent, the American people and the American Jews do not seem to understand the part that the American Jew has contributed toward the victory which America won and so that story may profitably be retold upon this occasion and in this presence.

The American Jew is but three percent of the American population, and yet we furnished from four to five percent of the army, navy, and marine corps. According to the proportion of population we should have furnished about 130,000 to 140,000 men to the armed forces of the United States. As a matter of fact, American Jews contributed more than 250,000 soldiers, sailors, and marines. In other words, we contributed as every other element of the population our quota of the

32 Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919), who served as assistant secretary of the U.S. Navy under President William McKinley (1843–1901), played a key role in planning the American naval campaign during the Spanish-American War (1898). He resigned his position to organize and lead the Rough Riders (see note 33), a wartime American cavalry unit that fought in Cuba. In 1901, Roosevelt became the twenty-sixth president of the United States.

33 The 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry (known as the “Rough Riders”), under the command of Colonel Theodore Roosevelt (see previous note), fought in the Spanish-American War (1898) and became legendary for its victory at the Battle of San Juan Hill in Cuba. The Rough Riders unit included nine Jews: Private Jacob (Wilbusky) Berlin (“killed in first skirmish”), Private Samuel Goldberg (Troop F), Private Fred Hoffman (Troop A), Second Lieutenant Samuel Greenwald (Troop A), Sergeant Joseph F. Kansky (Troop H and I), Private Hyman Lowitzki (Troop E), Private Hyman Rafalowitz (Troop F), Private Adolph S. Wertheim (Troop F), and Private Frederick W. Wolff (Troop D). Quoted from Cyrus Adler, “Preliminary List of Jewish Soldiers and Sailors Who Served in the Spanish-American War,” *American Jewish Year Book* 2 (1901): 540. According to an homage published by the philosemitic Baptist cleric Madison C. Peters (1859–1918): “Theodore Roosevelt, the intrepid leader of the Rough Riders, declared that in that brave regiment, which has challenged the admiration of the world, the most astonishing courage was displayed by the seven [*sic*] Jewish Rough Riders, one of whom became a lieutenant.” Madison C. Peters, *Justice to the Jew: The Story of What He Has Done for the World* (London: F. Tennyson Neely, 1899), 105.

34 The reference is to World War I (1914–1918).

draft and approximately 100,000 volunteers in addition.

One of the cruelest jeers that I heard during the war was that the Jew sought the non-combatant branches of the service. Investigation now reveals that the infantry was the most dangerous branch of the American army. Of the entire army approximately twenty-six percent were in the infantry, but of the entire number of Jews in the service fifty-one percent were in the infantry. (Applause)

The Quarter-Master Corp was commonly looked upon as typical of the non-combatant branches which were sought by Jewish service men. The Quarter-Master Corp formed approximately six and two-tenths percent of the entire army, but of the entire number of Jews in the service, only five percent were in the Quarter-Master Corp. And so I might go through the Ordnance Department and the Medical Corp and the various other so-called non-combatant branches of the service—a term that is a misnomer, but the facts are that the Jews furnished far more than their proportion in all of the so-called fighting and combatant branches of the service and had less than their proportion in the so-called non-combatant or non-fighting branches of the service.

The question may arise in your mind: How did these American Jews acquit themselves under the test of battle? It is difficult to answer that question by referring to the innumerable instances of heroism and bravery that are recorded in the official annals of the Government reports, but it is significant that there was one regiment, one division of the American army that was largely recruited from a Jewish district—the so-called Liberty Division, or the Seventy-seventh Division recruited from New York City, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. That division, because it was approximately forty percent Jewish, was called in derision during the war, the “Yiddish Division” of the American army. The records of the adjutant general disclose that this derided “Yiddish Division” of the American army gained more ground against the enemy in battle than any other division in France, (applause) and as a matter of fact seventeen percent of the entire ground gained by the American army against the enemy was gained by the Seventy-seventh Division. (Applause)

You have all heard of the famous Lost Battalion, the Three Hundred and Eighth Battalion of that division.³⁵ That battalion was largely composed of Jewish soldiers. It was commanded by Major [Charles W.] Whittlesey³⁶ and through a blunder it was led into a German trap and completely surrounded by Germans. A message was sent to Commander Whittlesey informing him that he was surrounded by Germans and asking him in the name of humanity to surrender because escape was hopeless. Commander Whittlesey achieved national fame by his three-word answer to the German message carrier—"Go to hell."³⁷

For two, three, four days that battalion held out under cruel artillery and machine-gun fire. Messenger after messenger attempted to get through the lines in order to bring relief to the battalion. It finally became suicide to make the attempt and Commander Whittlesey called for volunteers. A little chap from the East Side of New York volunteered to carry the message back to headquarters as to the position of the battalion. He crawled out over the trenches, he crossed through the ravines and through the woods and over the barbed wire fences and succeeded in carrying back to headquarters the message that brought relief and rescue to the Lost Battalion in the Argonne Forest. (Applause) So that the relief, so much heralded in song and story of the Lost Battalion, was

35 In October 1918, the nine companies of the U.S. 77th Division (later known as the "Lost Battalion") conducted an attack against German forces in the Argonne Forest. (Comprised largely of enlistees from New York City's Lower East Side, the 77th was also referred to as the "Metropolitan Division.") As part of the Allies' offensive on the Western front, the division advanced under Major Charles W. Whittlesey (see note 36) but inadvertently separated from French and American forces in the region. Cut off from reinforcements and supplies, the 77th became isolated and vulnerable to German attack. After enduring significant hardship for five days, including hundreds of men killed in action and captured, the Allied forces broke through the German lines and rescued the division's 194 remaining soldiers.

36 Major Charles W. Whittlesey (b. 1884, disappeared 1921) led the U.S. 77th Division (also known as the "Lost Battalion"; see previous note) in the Meuse-Argonne offensive on the Western front during World War I. After the war, Whittlesey received the Medal of Honor.

37 The American press reported Whittlesey's terse reply; however, Whittlesey himself later denied making the statement.

accomplished by Abraham Krotoshinsky,³⁸ a Jewish barber from the East Side in New York. (Applause)

May I tell you one other story of heroism upon the part of a Jew whom many of you may know? When the war broke out Michael Aaronsohn³⁹ was a student at the Hebrew Union College⁴⁰ in Cincinnati. He was exempt as were all divinity students but he went to the recruiting office and tendered his services. When he was told that they were not taking enlistments for the Chaplains Corp he said he did not want to join the Chaplains Corp, he wanted to go into the infantry. He became Sergeant Major of Colonel [Frederick W.] Galbraith's⁴¹ Regiment, the One Hundred and Forty-Seventh Ohio Infantry. During the assault upon Montfaucon,⁴² where the German Crown Prince⁴³ had his

38 Abraham Krotoshinsky (1892–1953), a Polish immigrant to the United States, enlisted in the U.S. Army during World War I and served with the U.S. 77th Division (also known as the “Lost Battalion”; see note 35). He later received the Distinguished Service Cross, owing to his heroic role in the division’s rescue.

39 In 1917, Michael Aaronsohn (1896–1976), a University of Cincinnati and Hebrew Union College student, chose to forgo a clerical exemption and enlisted in the U.S. Army. Serving with the 147th Infantry Regiment, 39th Division of the American Expeditionary Force, he rose to the rank of battalion sergeant major. During the Meuse-Argonne offensive, he was injured and blinded while attempting to rescue a wounded comrade. After the war, he completed his studies and became ordained in 1923. He served as a chaplain to the Disabled American Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and other groups, and founded the Jewish Braille Institute.

40 Founded in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1875, Hebrew Union College (which merged in 1948 with the Jewish Institute of Religion) is the seminary of the movement for Reform Judaism in North America.

41 Frederick W. Galbraith (1874–1921), a highly decorated war hero, served as commander of the 147th Infantry Regiment, 37th Division during World War I. In 1919, he was among the founders of the American Legion.

42 Montfaucon, a strategic hill at the center of the Meuse-Argonne offensive, was initially controlled by the Germans. As such, the German tactical advantage slowed and complicated the advance of the 37th and 79th Divisions of the American Expeditionary Forces and the French army. After enduring significant combat and chemical warfare losses, American troops captured Montfaucon in September 1918.

43 Friedrich Wilhelm Victor August Ernst (1882–1951), the last crown prince of the German empire and kingdom of Prussia, served as a commander of the German army during World War I.

headquarters, one of the members of the battalion was wounded and was lying on the wires in No Man's Land. Little Michael Aaronsohn went out in order to bring back to our lines this wounded comrade. He brought him back, but as he entered the American Lines Michael was struck by a high explosive shell and the sight of both of his eyes was forever destroyed. He came back to America with two glass eyes, but with his heart still aflame with the love of God and his faith in America unshaken, and he reentered the Hebrew Union College, completed his studies as a rabbi for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations,⁴⁴ and for his comrades in arms as the national chaplain of the Disabled American Veterans⁴⁵ of the World War.

In the face of the story of patriotism and sacrifice and courage such as that, do you not think there are certain notorious pacifists whose headquarters for a long time were in Detroit, Michigan, who ought to hang their heads in everlasting shame?⁴⁶ (Applause) And yet one of these men who has spent his millions in an effort to disparage the patriotism of the American Jew and who questions his loyalty to the principles of America had the effrontery when his own son was summoned by the Draft Board for service in the American Army,⁴⁷ to appeal to the

44 Founded in 1873 as the umbrella organization of the synagogue movement of Reform Judaism in North America, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was renamed in 2003 as the Union for Reform Judaism.

45 Established in 1920 by disabled veterans of the U.S. military, the organization, originally named the Disabled Veterans of the World War (DAVWW), held its first national meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio. Under the leadership of Robert S. Marx, who in 1921 was appointed the DAVWW's national commander, the organization grew rapidly and assumed a countrywide reach.

46 The reference is to the Detroit automotive industrialist Henry Ford (1863–1947), a self-professed pacifist, whose Peace Ship expedition—a chartered ocean liner that in 1915 transported American antiwar activists to Norway to meet with European counterparts—was ridiculed in the American press. Ironically, despite Ford's antiwar stance, his company became a major source of the 400-horsepower Liberty V-12 engine purchased by the U.S. War Department to power wartime American military aircraft.

47 When the United States entered the war in 1917, Henry Ford (see previous note) discouraged his son Edsel Bryant Ford (1893–1943) from enlisting in the U.S. military. The elder Ford sought and procured an exemption for his son on the grounds that he was

President of the United States⁴⁸ to exempt his son from the duties that other American boys cheerfully accepted, in order to protect his property and his principles of the country which affords him protection for his millions. (Applause)

Whenever I think of the libels upon the Jewish people, whenever I think of the assaults upon their patriotism and their loyalty that have been fomented and promulgated and paid for by this “pacifist” and then think of the story of Michael Aaronsohn and of the thousands of other Jewish boys who fought and who suffered and who died in the war, my heart boils so that I can hardly contain my indignation. (Applause)

And yet the heart and kernel of the stories that emanate day after day and week after week, and that are still being printed and published and advertised and sold by the *Dearborn Independent*,⁴⁹ the heart and kernel of those stories is that there is some international control of Jewry whose seat of Government is not in the United States which endeavors to subject the American people to the dominance and control of this gang of Jewish internationalists. These Jewish internationalists, so the editors of the *Dearborn Independent* would have you believe and have the American people believe, seek to dominate the American press, to dominate the American stage, the American movies, even American baseball, and to dominate the American farmer and the American government and the American Federal Reserve Bank. For what purpose? In order to bring the entire government and all of the people of the United States under the control of international Jewry as part of the scheme of this so-called

married with a dependent child and his work was essential to the war effort.

48 Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924), twenty-eighth president of the United States.

49 In the early 1920s, the *Dearborn Independent*, a newspaper owned and published by Henry Ford, printed a series of articles arguing a vast Jewish conspiracy was afoot in American society and quoted extensively from the antisemitic forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. At Ford’s instruction, the articles were gathered together and republished in a four-volume set titled *The International Jew: The World’s Foremost Problem*. In 1925, the *Dearborn Independent* reached a circulation of more than 900,000 readers. It was not until 1927, following a two-year lawsuit, that Ford publicly repudiated the *Independent’s* antisemitism and closed the paper.

international Jewry to ultimately rule the world under the leadership of a Jewish autocrat to be selected by the wise men of Zion.⁵⁰ (Laughter) A preposterous, a ridiculous story, but a story that is still being printed, still being published, and still being circulated in four volumes every day in the week from Dearborn, Michigan, and I am sorry to say that there are thousands of Americans who because of the prestige and the prominence and the power of the principal stockholder of that newspaper, believe those stories, and therefore believe that the Jew is disloyal to our government and is a traitor to the American flag.

I have recited the story of the Jewish part in the World War, because to my mind it is an answer written in deeds and not in words. (Applause) It is an answer that has been given by more than a quarter of a million American Jews who served with honor and credit from the humblest private in the ranks all the way up to Brigadier General [Charles Henry] Lauchheimer⁵¹ in the Marine Corp and from the humblest sailor on the seas all the way up to the Rear Admiral [Joseph] Strauss⁵² who commanded America's so-called Suicide Fleet in the North Sea. (Applause)

50 *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, an antisemitic hoax purporting to be a record of secret meetings of "the learned elders of Zion," was first published in Russia as an appendix to Sergei Nilus' *The Great in the Small: The Coming of the Anti-Christ and the Rule of Satan on Earth* (1905). The narrative claims to demonstrate the existence of an international Jewish conspiracy striving to achieve world domination through a tangled web of politics (anarchism, liberalism, Marxism), economic manipulation (capitalism, socialism), and cultural sabotage (the press, religious conflict). After World War I, the *Protocols* was translated into numerous languages and circulated worldwide. Though repeatedly discredited and debunked by scholars, the *Protocols* continues to be widely distributed and republished to this day.

51 Charles Henry Lauchheimer (1859–1920), a graduate the U.S. Naval Academy and Columbia University Law School in 1881 and 1884, respectively, rose through U.S. naval ranks from midshipman to brigadier general and adjutant and inspector of the U.S. Marine Corps.

52 Joseph Strauss (1861–1948), who rose to become the first Jewish admiral in the U.S. Navy, participated in the USS *Lancaster's* blockade of Cuba during the Spanish-American War and in World War I as a commander responsible for laying the North Sea Mine Barrage. In 1921, he was elevated to the rank of admiral and placed in command of the Asiatic Fleet. He invented several systems for mounting guns on ships and submarines.

But if you want to know the full story of the part played by the American Jew in the World War, you must go with me to the Argonne Cemetery and to the Belleau Woods and Château-Thierry and look upon those great democracies of the dead where 3,500 Jewish soldiers lie buried in the soil they sought to save; and you must go, as I have gone, from one corner of this country to the other, visiting hospital after hospital, and see with your own eyes the living casualty lists of some 16,000 Jewish soldiers and sailors who today are disabled and crippled or mutilated as the result of the service they gave to their country.

It is a thrilling sight to visit those cemeteries, where above the grave of every Christian soldier there is the cross of Jesus, and above the grave of every Jewish soldier there is the Star of David. But, my friends, the glory is that above them all is the Stars and Stripes, and the symbol of American liberty. (Applause) Their service teaches a great lesson and the American people need on each Memorial Day a re-baptism in the patriotic fires that inflamed this country during the crisis of war, and which welded this country into one so that castes and classes and creeds were merged into a common whole and rich and poor, Jew and gentile, immigrant and native-born dedicated themselves to a common country and a common ideal and a common cause. On Memorial Day, the people of this country ought to reconsecrate themselves to that great ideal of common service for these common ideals and it ought to help us wash away all the waves of hysteria such as the Ku Klux Klan⁵³ and Ford and Evolution Laws⁵⁴ and various other laws destructive of tolerance and

53 In the early twentieth century, many lower-class, white Protestant Americans responded to the waves of mass immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe and the Great Migration of African Americans with alarm and fear. Anxiety about the country's changing demographic profile fueled a surge in antisemitism and anti-Catholicism, giving rise to the era of the "Second Klan" (1915–1940). Within the context of the Klan's racist animus, which targeted Catholics, Jews, and black Americans, Jews were singled out as avaricious capitalists and dangerous radicals. It is estimated that by the mid-1920s the Klan's national membership reached between 2.5 and 4 million individuals, including a 40 percent concentration in Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio.

54 In the 1920s, many state legislatures considered adopting laws to prohibit the teaching of evolution in public schools. In 1923, Florida adopted a nonbinding resolution that

liberty and freedom have brought about during the decade since the war ended. (Applause)

Surely these men have not died in vain; surely their sacrifice was not for the mere love of glory. They went forth as crusaders in a great cause; they went forth to carry the message of American liberty, of American democracy, of American freedom to suffering people around the globe; they went forth so that war itself might be less probable and less possible; they went forth in the great ideal for which the Jewish religion stands, for the brotherhood of mankind, for a concert of nations of the earth. They were pledged to those great ideals and those great principles and their death will indeed have been in vain unless on this day we rededicate ourselves in their name to those very ideals for which they fought, so that those who lie in Flanders Fields may sleep and that those who live may never sleep in another Flanders Field.

I recall a little incident that stands forth in my memory because of its significance, and which I like to tell. After we had visited the cemeteries in France, we returned to Paris, and we marched up the beautiful Avenue of the Champs Elysees to the Arch of Triumph, to place an American flag over the grave of the Unknown French Poilu [French for "soldier"] who lies buried underneath that arch, and when the ceremonies were over we did not know which way to go, because we had been told that civilians are never permitted to march beneath the Arch of Triumph, that the Arch of Triumph is reserved for victorious armies returning from battle and in our perplexity our commander turned to Marshal [Ferdinand] Foch⁵⁵ who was standing close by and said, "Marshal, what do we do

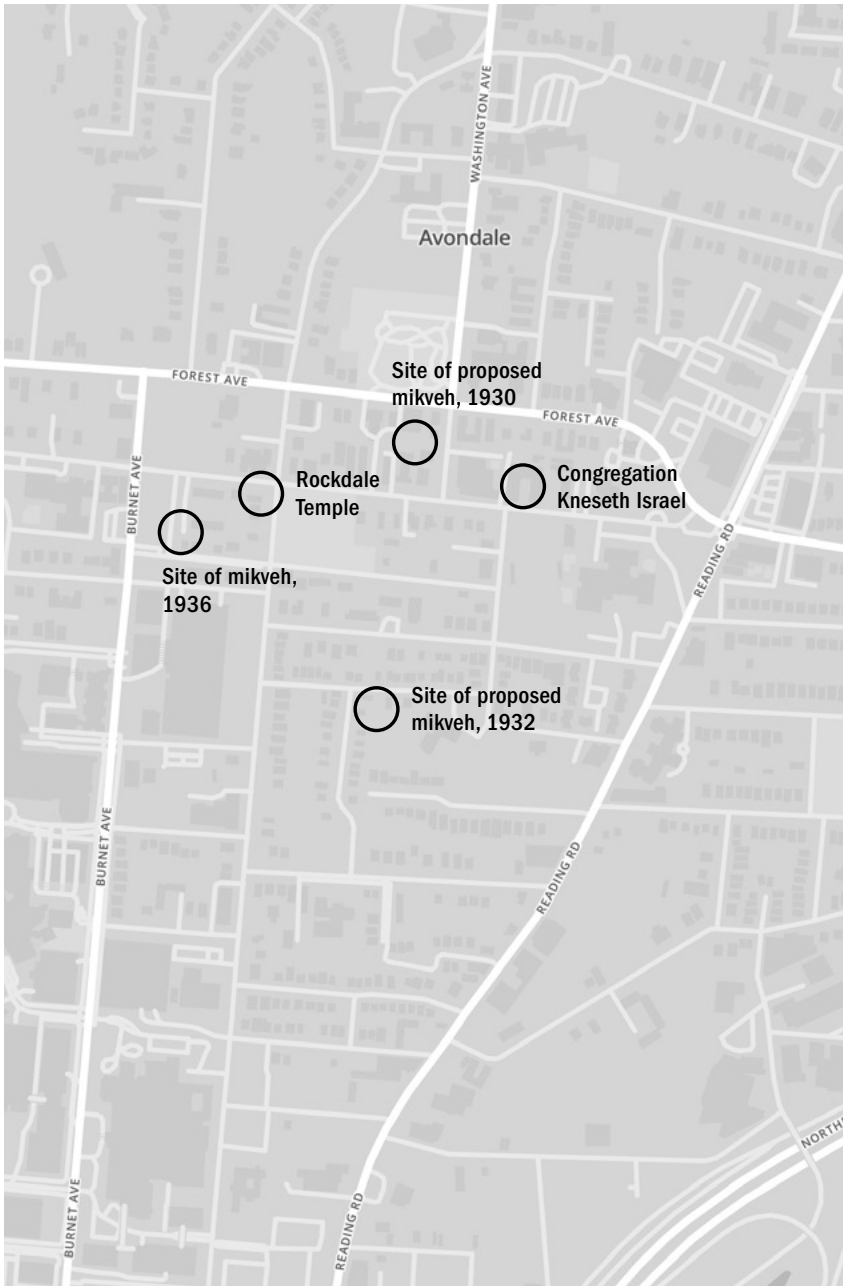
characterized the teaching of evolution as "improper and subversive to the best interest of the people." Anti-evolution activism spread quickly after 1925 in the wake of Tennessee's Butler Act and the Scopes Trial (see note 21). Thereafter, twenty other states considered three dozen anti-evolution laws; the states of Arkansas, Mississippi, and Oklahoma joined Tennessee in criminalizing the teaching of evolution. Until the 1960s, the Scopes Trial was the only significant legal challenge to anti-evolution laws.

55 Ferdinand Foch (1851–1929), a military strategist, chief of the French general staff, and marshal of France, was elevated in 1918 to head of the Allied Supreme Command during World War I.

now, do we go back the way we have come?” And quick as a flash Foch answered in four words, “Americans never turn back.” (Applause)

It is nearly a decade since the war ended and we still stand beneath the center of the Arch of Triumph, and the question before this nation is whether we are going back the way we have come; whether we are going back to the days of religious bigotry and intolerance; whether we are going back to the days of Know-Nothingism;⁵⁶ and Ku Kluxism and Fordism; whether we are going back to a government which subjects the church and the school to a combination, distasteful to the conscience of mankind; whether we are going back to war and bloodshed and battle as the only means of settling international disputes, or whether we are going on under the Arch of Triumph to realize the great ideals of American liberty, of American justice, of American tolerance, for which this country was founded and for which these heroes from the Revolutionary days to the Argonne have served and sacrificed; whether we are going on under the Arch of Triumph to a realization of this greater idea of world justice, and world freedom and world liberty and democracy, to which this nation pledged itself in 1917; to that question, although our progress beneath the Arch of Triumph may be slow, I believe there can only be one answer: Americans never turn back—and we are going on! (Stormy applause and rising convention.)

56 An outgrowth of nativist and anti-Catholic sentiment, the Know-Nothings (later renamed the American Party) was a populist and xenophobic movement that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century. The term “Know-Nothing” can be traced to the Secret Order of the Star-Spangled Banner and the Order of United Americans, semi-clandestine groups that spread in the 1850s from New York to other East Coast cities. When members were questioned about their activity, they responded, “I know nothing,” prompting the *New York Tribune* to disdainfully label them as “Know Nothings.”



Map of Avondale neighborhood in Cincinnati.
(Courtesy Paul Neff)

*Silver v. Philipson:
The Mikveh War That
Divided Cincinnati Jews
and Empowered American
Orthodoxy (1930s)*

JONATHAN D. SARNA

The Cincinnati “mikveh war” that played out before the zoning board and in the pages of local newspapers in the 1930s pitted the city’s two foremost rabbis and two highest-powered law firms against one another. The unusually public battle between Rabbis David Philipson and Eliezer Silver, and between the Seasongood and Taft law firms, redefined intra-Jewish relations in the city; taught American Orthodoxy valuable lessons concerning self-confidence, public relations, and politics; and in time became encrusted in myth. Even as the zoning board sided with Philipson and denied mikveh supporters a permit to build, it handed Silver a victory that empowered the Orthodox community locally and nationally.

Rabbi Eliezer Silver (1882–1968), one of the foremost Orthodox rabbis of his time, immigrated to America in 1907 after studying with some of Lithuania’s most illustrious Orthodox luminaries. He held pulpits in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and Springfield, Massachusetts, and in 1931 moved to Cincinnati to serve as the community’s Chief Orthodox Rabbi of the newly established “Vaad Ho’ier—Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations,” which he had helped to organize as a consulting rabbi. Simultaneously, he occupied the pulpit of Congregation Kneseth Israel, then located at 610 Rockdale Avenue, and also served as president of Agudath ha-Rabbanim, the national organization of North American Orthodox rabbis trained and ordained in Eastern Europe.¹

1 Aaron Rakeffet-Rothkoff, *The Silver Era in American Jewish Orthodoxy: Rabbi Eliezer Silver*

Historian Benny Kraut memorably portrayed Silver as “an irascible, pixyish man, small in physical stature, with a heavy Yiddish accent” who was nevertheless “dynamic, charismatic, and capable of exuding disarming charm.” In addition to his “single-minded fidelity to Torah Judaism and Orthodox Jews,” he displayed, according to Kraut, “ceaseless activism,” “guile,” “political sagacity,” “dramatic flair,” and “a not inconsiderable dose of chutzpah and hyperbolic self-esteem.”² All of these characteristics displayed themselves during the mikveh war.

When Silver came to town, Cincinnati’s only mikveh, at 813 Mound Street in the old Jewish neighborhood of Cincinnati’s West End, was decrepit. Silver had the mikveh spruced up and pronounced the water “fresh and clean,” but the mikveh’s poor condition and inconvenient location, far from where the bulk of Jews lived in Avondale, kept most Orthodox Jewish women away.³

As part of a larger interwar-years effort by Orthodox rabbis to “rescue the Jewish marriage laws from the obscurity and disregard into which modernity had cast them,”⁴ Orthodox Jews in 1930, before Silver’s arrival, had purchased property in Avondale, on the west side of Washington Avenue, between Rockdale and Forest Avenues, with an eye toward

and his Generation (Jerusalem and New York: Feldheim Publishers/Yeshiva University Press, 1981) and Menahem Glickman-Porush, *Ish ha-Halakhah veba-Maaseh* (Jerusalem: 1947), available on HebrewBooks.com, are the most comprehensive biographies.

2 Benny Kraut, *German-Jewish Orthodoxy in an Immigrant Synagogue: Cincinnati’s New Hope Congregation and the Ambiguities of Ethnic Religion* (New York: Markus Wiener Publishing, 1988), 81; Jonathan D. Sarna and Nancy H. Klein, *The Jews of Cincinnati* (Cincinnati: HUC-JIR, 1989), 124–127.

3 Rakeffet-Rothkoff, *Silver Era*, 83.

4 Jenna Weissman Joselit, *The Wonders of America: Reinventing Jewish Culture, 1880–1950* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1994), 21; for the history of the American mikveh during these years, see Jenna Weissman Joselit, *New York’s Jewish Jews: The Orthodox Community in the Interwar Years* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 115–122; Zev Eleff, *Modern Orthodox Judaism: A Documentary History* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2016), 304–07; Joshua Hoffman, “The Institution of the Mikvah in America,” in *Total Immersion: A Mikvah Anthology*, ed Rivkah Slonim (Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1996), 76–92; and Isobel-Marie Johnston, “The History of *Niddah* in America as Social Drama: Genealogy of a Ritual Practice” (unpublished master’s thesis: University of Arizona, 2016). I am grateful to Ms. Johnston for sharing her thesis with me.

building a new mikveh. The property lay just around the corner from Rockdale Temple, the city's most venerable Reform congregation. When news of the plan broke, "wealthy Jewish residents," who by no coincidence were leading members of Rockdale Temple, protested. One of them was Stella ("Mrs. J. Walter") Heinsheimer Freiberg, past president of the (Reform) National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods and among the most active, accomplished, and best-known matrons in the city. She and others insisted that theirs was a "residential zone" that barred "any building to be used for business purposes." The city's director of building denied permission to build.⁵

Orchestrating this battle against the mikveh from behind the scenes was the rabbi of Rockdale Temple, Dr. David Philipson (1862–1949). Tall, handsome, fatherly, and a towering figure within Cincinnati Jewish life, Philipson had been a member of the first graduating class of Hebrew Union College (1883) and had held his pulpit since 1888. He built Rockdale Temple into "the largest and most influential" congregation in the Midwest. He was an acknowledged leader within the worldwide Reform movement in Judaism (whose history he had written). Newspapers often described him as the "dean of American rabbis." He was also politically active in Cincinnati, opposing the political machine of Republican boss George B. Cox and supporting its "good government" opponents, the Charterite reform movement. The city's first mayor following the passage of municipal reform, Democratic lawyer Murray Seasongood, was Philipson's congregant and friend.⁶

5 *Cincinnati Enquirer* (26 March 1930): 2; (21 May 1930): 12; (23 May 1930): 7; (5 June 1930): 28; Laura Lieber, "Stella Heinsheimer Freiberg," *Shalvil/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women*. 31 December 1999, Jewish Women's Archive, <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/freiberg-stella-heinsheimer> (accessed on 9 December 2021).

6 On Philipson, see Douglas Kohn, "The Dean of American Rabbis: A Critical Study of the Life, Career and Significance of David Philipson, as Reflected in His Writings" (rabbinic thesis, HUC-JIR, 1987); Philipson's autobiography, *My Life as an American Jew* (Cincinnati: John G. Kidd, 1941); Bozenna Chylinska, "Homo Judaicus Americanus: Rabbi David Philipson—An American Jew," *American Studies* 16 (1998): 57–65; and Jonathan D. Sarna and Karla Goldman, "From Synagogue-Community to Citadel of Reform: The History of K.K.Bene Israel (Rockdale Temple) in Cincinnati, Ohio," in *American Congregations, volume 1*, ed. James P. Wind and James W. Lewis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994),

To Philipson, the plan to build a mikveh in Avondale was part of a larger effort on the part of East European Orthodox Jews to “medievalize the community.” He believed, as he wrote in his diary, that Silver had “descended upon Cincinnati with the idea of turning this center of liberal Judaism into an annex of East European obscurantist orthodoxy.”⁷ His own congregation had stopped supporting a mikveh back in 1857, and he personally deemed Jewish laws concerning ritual purity barbaric and shameful, “entirely foreign to our modern interpretation of Jewish faith and practice.” He thought women should bathe in the privacy of their own homes, and certainly wanted no mikveh built in close proximity to Rockdale Temple.⁸

The zoning board, to which Orthodox Jews appealed the director of building’s ruling, struggled to understand whether, as the Orthodox contended, the mikveh was “a necessary accessory to public worship,” in which case the building could legally proceed, or whether, as Reform Jews insisted, it was not necessary at all. Louis Rubenstein and David Falk, lawyers for the Orthodox petitioners (Rubenstein himself belonged to an Orthodox synagogue), introduced “several large volumes of Jewish law”

179–194. On Cox and Seasongood, see Zane L. Miller, *Boss Cox’s Cincinnati: Urban Politics in the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford, 1968).

7 Diary of David Philipson, entries of 4 May 1932 and 8 December 1931, MS-35, box 3, David Philipson Papers, American Jewish Archives (hereafter AJA). Many thanks to Dana Herman for finding and scanning entries from the Philipson diary for me.

8 Karla Goldman, *Beyond the Synagogue Gallery: Finding a Place for Women in American Judaism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 74; Michael A. Meyer, “New Waters in an Old Vessel: A History of Mikveh in Modern Judaism,” *Between Jewish Tradition and Modernity: Rethinking an Old Opposition: Essays in Honor of David Ellenson*, ed. Michael A. Meyer and David N. Myers (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2014), 145; *Cincinnati Enquirer* (6 May 1932): 6; Alfred Segal’s columns on bathing at home reflected Philipson’s views; see *American Israelite* (26 November 1931): 1; (12 May 1932): 1. An Orthodox rabbinic proponent of revitalizing mikveh use, Rabbi David Miller of Oakland, California, “lavishly spent money to popularize . . . placing a *Mikvah* in every Jewish home” as a response to indoor plumbing; see his *The Secret of the Jew: His Life, His Family* (Oakland, 1930), 21. Although a contemporary rabbi has defended Miller’s approach (see Aryeh Klapper, “Bathtub Mikvaot and the Curious History of a Halakhic Libel,” *The Lehrhaus*, 15 June 2020, <https://thelehrhaus.com/scholarship/7267/> [accessed on 27 January 2022]), Silver evidently dismissed Miller’s “original idea” when one of Philipson’s supporters mentioned it.

to buttress their claims, presumably weighty rabbinic tomes concerning the proper construction of a mikveh and its use by menstruants, converts, and others. When board members, unsurprisingly, proved unable to absorb and comprehend this material, they tasked the board's secretary, Walter Daubert, with "consulting the volumes" and reporting back. In the end, the zoning board denied the appeal.⁹ Philipson subsequently revealed to his diary that he "was largely instrumental in having the board take this action." He "thought the matter was settled for all time."¹⁰

Silver, however, thought otherwise. In 1932, he and the Vaad Ho'ier acquired property at 3460 Hallwood Place, slightly further away from Rockdale Temple, and determined to try again. For the second time, application was made for a "modification of the zoning ordinance to permit the construction of a Mikveh." Hallwood Place, too, was zoned as residential property, so the legal question remained the same. Once again, the director of building said no; the Orthodox appealed to the zoning board; and Reform Jewish neighbors sent in "protests." The *Cincinnati Enquirer*, alerted to the zoning board case, reported that a "lively hearing" was anticipated.¹¹

What made the 4 May public hearing before the zoning board of appeals particularly "lively" was the appearance both of Silver and of the Orthodox community's new attorney, Robert A. Taft (1889–1953). First in his class at Harvard Law School and one of the city's most prominent and highly respected legal minds, as well as a cofounder of the Taft, Stettinius & Hollister law firm, Taft was the eldest son of President William Howard Taft and, in 1932, a Republican member of the Ohio Senate. (Later, from 1939 until his death, he would represent Ohio in the U.S. Senate.) He generally focused on corporate, tax, and political matters, not zoning cases.¹² According to Silver, he personally

9 *Cincinnati Enquirer* (5 June 1930): 28; for the bar mitzvah of Louis Rubenstein's son at the Orthodox Washington Avenue Synagogue, see *American Israelite* (12 September 1935): 2.

10 Philipson Diary, 4 May 1932, MS-35, box 3, Philipson Papers, AJA.

11 *Cincinnati Enquirer* (5 April 1932): 19; (7 April 1932): 12.

12 James T. Patterson, *Mr. Republican: A Biography of Robert A. Taft* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972) is the standard biography; see also Clarence E. Wunderlin, Jr., ed.,

had solicited Taft's help in this case. He recalled meeting Robert's father, William Howard Taft, in the White House in 1912 to lobby for Russian Jews who were denied their rights by the tsar,¹³ and he now entreated Taft's son to assist Orthodox Jews in Cincinnati who were denied their right to a mikveh.¹⁴ Be this as it may, it was most likely the political aspects of the case that led to Taft's unusual appearance at the hearing. The mikveh's opponents, including Philipson, all had supported Seasongood and the Charterite political reform movement that Taft, as a Republican, had opposed. Indeed, a law associate of Seasongood, Clyde M. Abbott, handled the case against the mikveh, and some expected Seasongood himself to appear at the hearing. Taft and Seasongood had become sworn enemies, especially after the former mayor characterized the Republican as "an ornamental target to cover a rotten structure." Now, by defending Orthodox Jews and the mikveh, Taft sought revenge. He tacitly cast his Charterite opponents as religious bigots while holding himself forth as a defender of Orthodox Jews' religious rights.¹⁵

The *Cincinnati Enquirer* published a full account of the zoning board hearing. "Attorney Taft told of the ancient rites that orthodox Jews hold to be an essential part of their religion," it recounted. "He promised that the bathing of the women of the congregation would disturb no one." Rather than relying on "large volumes of Jewish law" that board members could not comprehend, Taft had Silver create a memorandum in English

The Papers of Robert A. Taft, 4 vols. (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1997–2006); and Russell Kirk and James McClellan, *The Political Principles of Robert A. Taft* (New York: Fleet Press, 1967). None of these sources mentions Eliezer Silver. Taft later became much closer to Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver of Cleveland (no relation), who won Taft over to the Zionist cause. 13 "Rabbi Silver Visits President Taft," *The Harrisburg Telegraph* (13 June 1912): 6. I am grateful to Menachem Butler for this reference.

14 Eliezer Silver, *They Always Fought for Our Cause: The Influential Taft Family and their Attitude to Jewry* [in Yiddish] (Toronto, 1946), 14–15. Many thanks to Yoel Finkelman for making a scan of the National Library of Israel's copy of this pamphlet available to me. See also Glickman-Porush, *Ish ba-Halakhah veba-Maaseh*, 45–46.

15 Patterson, *Mr. Republican*, 121–145, esp. 143; and Miller, *Boss Cox's Cincinnati*. Clyde M. Abbott's obituary in *Cincinnati Enquirer* (24 June 1976) links him to Seasongood's law firm; for the expectation that Seasongood himself would appear, see Glickman-Porush, *Ish ba-Halakhah*, 46.

concerning the laws of the mikveh, including primary sources and references to scholarship concerning the mikveh's hygienic benefits. In his own appearance before the board, Silver pointed to the presence of mikvehs in many other cities and observed that, according to a strict interpretation of the Code of Jewish Law, Jews "were not permitted to live in a city without a Mikveh." On the other hand, "more than 30 property owners and residents of Hallwood Place, many of them of the Jewish faith, appeared to protest." Attorney Abbott went so far as to warn that "if the bathhouse were permitted, the old custom of sacrificing animals or the kosher slaughter houses might be permitted in residence districts." Irwin Krohn, a member of the zoning board and a congregant at Rockdale Temple, engaged in a "warm tilt" with Silver during the hearing. The former insisted that the "proper place" for a mikveh "was in a business zone," and the latter responded that "the Mikveh should be in a quiet place." The two sides similarly clashed over whether women who used the mikveh were required to pay a fee. In the end, the zoning board of appeals took the matter "under consideration" and promised a decision in two weeks.¹⁶

Meanwhile, Philipson seethed. "The daily press had long accounts of the meeting of the Zoning Board and quoted rather largely from a brief submitted by 'Chief Rabbi' Silver," he complained to his diary, his use of quotation marks showing contempt for the rabbinic title that Silver assumed.¹⁷ He may also have inspired the *American Israelite's* unusual personal attack on Taft: "Mr. Taft is advised to confine his public pleadings to tax matters of which he knows a great deal; certainly, his misdirected and unappreciated appeal for the Hallwood Place mikveh suggests that he is not privy to the way women bathe in Avondale."¹⁸ In an extraordinary move, Philipson decided "to send a communication to the *Cincinnati Enquirer* explaining the situation & castigating the claim of the 'Chief

16 *Cincinnati Enquirer* (5 May 1932): 28; on Silver's memorandum, see Silver, *They Fought*, 15; Rakeffet-Rothkoff, *Silver Era*, 85. For the scientific defense of Jewish "family purity" laws at this time, see Beth Wenger, "Mitzvah and Medicine: Gender, Assimilation, and the Scientific Defense of 'Family Purity,'" *Jewish Social Studies* 5, nos. 1 & 2 (1998–99): 177–202.

17 Philipson Diary, 12 May 1932, MS-35, box 3, Philipson Papers, AJA.

18 *American Israelite* (12 May 1932): 1. Taft defended Silver on a pro bono basis.

Rabbi' to speak for the community."¹⁹ Cincinnati rabbis—going back to Isaac Mayer Wise—had historically confined attacks on fellow rabbis to the Jewish press. Philipson violated this rule in his column in the *Enquirer*; he excoriated Silver before a broad non-Jewish audience.

Identifying himself as “the spokesman for a large section of Cincinnati Jewry,” Philipson began his communication by charging that Silver did “not speak even for united orthodox Jewry and certainly not for Jewry in general.” He even questioned whether Silver truly presided over the Agudath ha-Rabbanim, or merely was “an Ex-President of that organization.” He warmly endorsed the anti-mikveh stance of his own Rockdale Temple congregant, zoning board member Irwin Krohn, and characterized that as the unanimous view of liberal Jewry. “There will not be one dissent on the part of that large body of Jews who have given Cincinnati so prominent a position among the Jewish communities of the United States.” As for Silver’s title, which he clearly considered a threat to his own esteemed status as the “dean of the American rabbinate,” he reminded Cincinnatians that “I was President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis ... and am now its Honorary President.” This did not empower him “to issue pronouncements as Chief Rabbi,” he clarified. “Nor can any other rabbi, liberal or orthodox, assume this title if he is an honest man.”²⁰

Philipson’s unprecedented public attack, along with private fulminations found in his diary (where, among other things, he labeled Silver “an unspeakable agitator,” “a demagogue,” “a rabbinical grafter,” and “a most unpleasant type”²¹), came at a moment when, approaching the age of seventy, his own position in Cincinnati was weakening. “I stand in proud isolation in my universalistic advocacy of Judaism,” he admitted at one point. He felt increasingly at odds with the city’s other Reform rabbis as well as professors and students at Hebrew Union College who, unlike him, supported Zionism. “Frequently,” he confessed, he found himself “laughed to scorn.” Weakening him further was the fact that the Great Depression hit Rockdale Temple hard; its membership and income declined sharply. The anger he directed toward Silver echoed

19 Philipson Diary, 12 May 1932, MS-35, box 3, Philipson Papers, AJA.

20 *Cincinnati Enquirer* (6 May 1932): 6.

21 Philipson Diary, 5 May 1932, MS-35, box 3, Philipson Papers, AJA.

his broader sense that Jewish life—locally, nationally, and internationally—was headed in the wrong direction.²²

Philipson's widely discussed piece in the *Enquirer* provided Silver with an opening that he did not waste. Unlike his Orthodox predecessors in Cincinnati, he understood public relations. He realized that Philipson had handed him an opportunity to introduce the East European Orthodox Jewish community to the Cincinnati community at large. Shrewdly, instead of personally responding to Philipson, Silver entrusted that task to Vaad Ho'ier president Aaron Z. Isaacs (1879–1959), a third-generation Cincinnati Orthodox Jewish businessman with a pedigree in the city dating back to the Jewish community's earliest days. A contemporary recalled that Isaacs and his siblings had "an aura of aristocracy which seemed far finer and rarer than the aristocracy of the richer German Jews."²³ Isaacs's "Answer to David Philipson," besides representing the views of the "chief rabbi," looked to elevate Orthodoxy and the position of Silver, and to diminish Philipson's stature and influence among Cincinnati non-Jews.²⁴

"The orthodox Jews of Cincinnati, who are over 65 per cent of the local Jewish population, strongly resent Dr. Philipson's repeated attempts to interfere with and dictate to the orthodox Jewish community," Isaacs began. He charged that "for sheer effrontery and intolerance" the Reform rabbi's letter had "probably never been equaled." He then proceeded to distinguish Reform and Orthodox Judaism in the city, a signal of just how strained relations between the two had become. "They really," he wrote, "should be considered as two separate and distinct religions." Isaacs questioned whether Philipson truly represented the city's Reform Jews ("surely he cannot claim to represent the Zionists"), asserted that "90 per cent of the orthodox Jews of the United States and Canada"

22 Sarna and Goldman, "From Synagogue-Community to Citadel of Reform," 193–194.

23 Boris D. Bogen, *Born A Jew* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 73; Sarna and Klein, *Jews of Cincinnati*, 60–62; for background on the family, see <http://tuvtaam.blogspot.com/2010/03/> (accessed on 27 January 2022).

24 The more traditional Jewish newspaper in Cincinnati, *Every Friday*, reprinted the *Enquirer* letters side by side, accompanied by photographs of Philipson ("Reform Leader") and Silver ("Orthodox Leader"), evidence that the dueling letters were seen as a debate between the two leaders; see *Every Friday* 10, no. 20 (13 May 1932): 2.

accepted Silver's "interpretations and decisions," and claimed (with considerable exaggeration) that 13 million Jews around the world "observe the laws of the Mikveh." He concluded by offering Cincinnatians a counter-narrative to Philipson's familiar history of Reform Jewish triumphalism. "The early Jewish settlers of Cincinnati, among whom were my grandparents, were orthodox Jews," he insisted. "These Jews were the ones who laid the foundations for the remarkable good will between Jews and non-Jews in Cincinnati."²⁵

Other Orthodox Jews in the city joined in defending Silver in the pages of the *Enquirer*. They affirmed that Silver ("one of the greatest Talmudic authorities and a Hebrew scholar of international repute") really did head up the Agudath ha-Rabbanim, and that "the mikveh ... is one of the basic fundamentals of Orthodox Judaism." Most significantly, they explained to non-Jews how much rabbis like Philipson and Silver differed from one another:

The two men are of entirely different religious faiths. Dr. Philipson may not believe in the Talmud and Rabbi Silver does. Dr. Philipson may not believe in kosher food and Rabbi Silver does. Dr. Philipson suffers no pangs of conscience if he smokes on the Sabbath, but Rabbi Silver regards it as a sin.²⁶

Never before in Cincinnati had the differences between the Reform and Orthodox Jewish communities been so starkly bared before the public at large.

Philipson came under considerable criticism for airing his differences with Silver so publicly. The exchange embarrassed some congregants and weakened local Jews' ability to project unity on matters of central Jewish communal concern. One of Philipson's younger colleagues, the Chicago Reform rabbi S. Felix Mendelsohn (1889–1953), wrote in the widely read *Chicago Sentinel* that given America's tradition of freedom, "it is

25 *Cincinnati Enquirer* (10 May 1932): 6. On the theme of Jewish-Christian goodwill in Cincinnati, see Sarna & Klein, *Jews of Cincinnati*, 7–9. Isaacs's letter reflects a theme that Zev Eleff spells out in his *Authentically Orthodox: A Tradition-Bound Faith in American Life* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2020).

26 *Cincinnati Enquirer* (11 May 1932): 4.

our firm conviction that if orthodox Jews want a mikveh they are legally and morally entitled to have it.” He castigated Philipson for “the airing out of internal difficulties in the general press,” and concluded that “there is no earthly reason why the outside world should be familiar with our petty squabbles nor is any benefit derived from this.”²⁷ Philipson’s good friend, the award-winning journalist Alfred Segal, writing in the *American Israelite*, similarly took him to task. “Our fraternal quarrels,” he lectured the “venerable dean” of the American rabbinate, “should be fought out within the family, not in the public.”²⁸ Philipson lamely explained in his diary that “the mistaken impression given to the public had to be corrected.” While he insisted that “I never wash dirty linen in public,” he confessed that “once in a great while it becomes a necessity.”²⁹

When the zoning board announced its verdict, on 18 May 1932, the *Cincinnati Post* headline read simply, “‘Mikveh’ is Banned.” The *Cincinnati Enquirer* more accurately explained that the “permit to erect a Mikveh at 3460 Hallwood Place” was denied, and set forth the three reasons underlying the zoning board’s decision. The first, while not noticed at the time, represented a significant victory for Silver and Taft: The board declared, unequivocally, that “the code of Jews laws, customs and rules bearing upon personal Hebraic practice requires the use of a public or private bath referred to as a Mikveh in said laws.” The contrary view, expressed by Philipson and those who insisted that women should use indoor bathtubs, was summarily rejected. The second reason the board provided determined “that a Mikveh is an institution devoted to the observance of a ritualistic rite, whereas a synagogue is a place of worship, the services of which do not require the use of a Mikveh.” That explained to the board’s satisfaction why a synagogue could be built within a residential area, while a mikveh could not. Finally, in a victory for the mikveh’s opponents, the board ruled that “the public health, safety, convenience, comfort, prosperity and general welfare” of the community did not require a mikveh so no zoning variance could be issued. As a result, the director of building’s original decision stood,

27 *The Sentinel* [Chicago], 86, no. 9 (27 May 1932): 5.

28 *American Israelite* (12 May 1932): 1.

29 Philipson Diary, 12 May 1932, MS-35, box 3, Philipson Papers, AJA.

and the appeal of Silver and Taft was denied.³⁰ Philipson cheered into his diary: “All’s well that ends well.” He hoped the decision would quiet “the aggressive tactics of the so-called ‘chief rabbi.’”³¹

Not for the first time, though, he underestimated his Orthodox opponent. Just two years later, on 21 June 1934, the *American Israelite* quietly announced that “a Mikveh will be built at 409 Hickory Street” by the “Tevilah-Mikveh Association, of which Rabbi Eliezer Silver is chairman.” Within eight months, the cornerstone was laid. On 21 May 1936, the *Enquirer* reported that “the new two-story buff brick building” containing the mikveh was ready for its dedication, with Silver to be the featured speaker. This time, the paper identified him as “chief rabbi of the orthodox Jewish group of the city,” a tacit acknowledgment that the city’s Reform and Orthodox Jews looked up to different leaders. Orthodox Jews reportedly “turned out en masse” to celebrate the mikveh’s opening.³²

How did Silver accomplish this feat? Multiple accounts of the Cincinnati mikveh war, all of which stem from Silver, distort the story. They play down the mikveh’s two defeats at the hands of the zoning board, provide no details on how it finally won approval, and focus mainly on the great Orthodox victory that Silver and Taft supposedly scored over the Reform Jews, Philipson and Seasongood.³³

Actually, Silver won by closely adhering to the rules. Instead of buying an existing residential structure and applying for a zoning variance, as he had before, he cleverly purchased vacant nonresidential land on Hickory Street in Avondale, near Congregation Ohav Shalom (itself formerly a movie house and therefore zoned for business).³⁴ He reported to the zoning board that he planned “to build a two-story brick building for recreation purposes.”³⁵ The same director of building

30 *Cincinnati Post* (18 May 1932): 1; *Cincinnati Enquirer* (19 May 1932): 22.

31 Philipson Diary, 19 May 1932, MS-35, box 3, Philipson Papers, AJA.

32 *American Israelite* (21 June 1934): 5; *Cincinnati Enquirer* (24 February 1935): 14; (21 May 1936): 13; Rakeffet-Rothkoff, *Silver Era*, 87.

33 Silver, *They Fought*, 14–15; Glickman-Porush, *Ish ha-Halakbah veba-Maaseh*, 45–46; Rakeffet-Rothkoff, *Silver Era*, 82–87.

34 See <https://www.etzchaimcincinnati.org/our-history> (accessed 27 January 2022).

35 The application by “Rabbi Eli Silver” was listed in *Cincinnati Enquirer* (15 January 1935): 19.

who previously turned him down could readily assent to this proposal. Whether he understood that the “recreation” involved dipping in the mikveh is unclear. Neither Philipson nor anybody else challenged the project. They had no obvious legal grounds to do so, and in any case, Philipson remained scarred from his battle with Silver in 1932. Orthodox Jews expended some \$8,000 (more than \$150,000 in 2020 dollars) on the mikveh building amid the Great Depression; it took two years to complete.³⁶

For local Orthodox Jews, the 1936 dedication of the mikveh marked both a happy ending following a bruising six-year battle, as well as a coming-of-age moment. For years, the Orthodox community had been weak, internally divided, rudderless, and subservient to Reform Jewish leaders,³⁷ but now, thanks to Silver, it had stood up to the city’s mightiest Reform rabbi of all—and triumphed. Likewise thanks to Silver, the Orthodox had successfully fought a public relations battle and displayed political savvy, exemplified by the appearance on their behalf of Robert A. Taft. The inconvenient fact that Silver and Taft lost their appeal to the zoning board proved less important in the long run than that the mikveh in Avondale was ultimately built. As a bonus, the city’s Orthodox Jews gained separate recognition within the city following the battle—the *Enquirer* dubbed them “the Orthodox Jewish group”—with Silver acknowledged as their leader and “chief rabbi.”³⁸

Orthodox leaders across the country heard about Silver’s accomplishment. He himself trumpeted the story, and (with a host of inaccuracies) it became part of Orthodox folklore. When other ambitious Orthodox rabbis immigrated to America in the ensuing decades, they did as Silver had done. The empowering tactics he pioneered in his battle to build a mikveh—fearlessness in the face of opposition, effective public relations, and savvy political alliances—remain part of Orthodoxy’s playbook to this day.

36 *American Israelite* (24 January 1935): 5; some Orthodox Jews in the community, followers of Rabbi Bezalel Epstein, opposed the expenditure and challenged Silver; see *American Israelite* (31 January 1935): 4; (14 February 1935): 4.

37 Sarna and Klein, *Jews of Cincinnati*, 121–123.

38 *Cincinnati Enquirer* (21 May 1936): 13.

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“The Dean of the Reform Rabbinate versus President of Union of Orthodox Rabbis of United States and Canada,”
***Every Friday*, 13 May 1932, p. 2.**

Below we are printing a letter of Rabbi David Philipson which appeared in the Cincinnati Enquirer on last Friday, May 6th. We also print herewith a reply to Dr. Philipson published in the Enquirer of Tuesday, May 10th.

We feel that Rabbi Philipson's action in sending this letter to the press and the contents of the letter are provocative of earnest discussion. While we are holding our own comment until a later date, we invite our readers to send in expressions of their own opinion, for publication in the columns of *Every Friday*.

Letters must be signed and address of the writer given. Letters may be written in Yiddish or Hebrew as well as English, such letters to be translated in our office and printed in English.

The letter of Dr. Philipson reads as follows:

Editor, Cincinnati Enquirer

The account of the meeting of the Zoning Board as given on Page 28 of this morning's issue (May 4) of *The Enquirer* naturally aroused my interest. I feel that as the spokesman for a large section of Cincinnati Jewry I should attempt to clarify the situation.

In the first place, the individual who styles himself Chief Rabbi of the United States and Canada presumes too greatly. There is no such dignity in this country as a Chief Rabbi. The person in question was, as I understand, the presiding officer of the Association of Orthodox Rabbis for a time.* He is therefore now an Ex-President of that organization. This and nothing more. His presumption in claiming the title of Chief

Rabbi was roundly and soundly scored recently by another orthodox rabbi of prominence in the East. He therefore does not speak even for united orthodox Jewry and certainly not for Jewry in general.

There is a distinct and pronounced cleft religiously speaking, among Jews. There are many shades of opinion, but in the by and the large Jews may be divided into the liberal or reform, the conservative and the orthodox groups. The interpretation of Jewish belief and life by the orthodox belongs to an outgrown past as far as the liberals or reformers are concerned. I question whether this self appointed spokesman represents the sentiment of even all the orthodox Jews in Cincinnati or any of the so called conservatives. He surely does not and can not speak for the liberals.

For example, this institution of the mikveh or ritual bath which he is now championing is entirely foreign to our modern interpretation of Jewish faith and practice. The stand taken by Mr. Irwin M. Krohn, a member of my congregation, as reported in the story of the meeting, represents correctly the viewpoint of liberal Jewry. From that stand there will not be one dissent on the part of that large body of Jews who have given Cincinnati so prominent a position among the Jewish communities of the United States during so many years and who have been so largely instrumental in creating and maintaining that entente cordiale between Jews and non-Jews for which our city is so justly famous. In the name of that not negligible section of Jews which I have had the honor of representing for so many years I have felt it incumbent upon myself to shed light upon a rather muddled situation.

Neither Mr. Silver nor any one else can lay just claim to the title Chief Rabbi of the Jews of the United States. I was President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the largest rabbinical organization in this country for several years, and am now its Honorary President. This does not empower me to issue pronouncements as Chief Rabbi. Nor would I or any other of my eminent colleagues who has held that same high presidential office of our conference presume to do so. Nor can any other rabbi, liberal or orthodox, assume this title if he is an honest man.

Rabbi David Philipson

*Rabbi Philipson is misinformed. Rabbi Silver is at present the leader of the union of Orthodox rabbis of U.S. and Canada

The answer to Dr. Philipson, from Aaron Z. Isaacs, reads as follows:

Editor, Cincinnati Enquirer

Dear Sir:

The orthodox Jews of Cincinnati, who are over 65 per cent of the local Jewish population, strongly resent Dr. Philipson's repeated attempts to interfere with and dictate to the orthodox Jewish community.

For sheer effrontery and intolerance his last letter has probably never been equaled.

While it is true that all Jews, both orthodox and reform, belong to the same Jewish nation, they really should be considered as two separate and distinct religions, as they have hardly anything in common from the religious standpoint. It certainly is out of place for the minister of one religion to criticize and ridicule the customs and observances of another faith.

Dr. Philipson appoints himself spokesman (quoting his own statement) for a large section of Cincinnati Jewry and claims it is necessary for him to attempt to clarify the situation. According to his own admission he represents the reform Jews only and they constitute about 35 per cent of the Jews of Cincinnati. Paraphrasing his own language, I will say "I question whether this self-appointed spokesman represents the sentiment of even all of the reform Jews of Cincinnati." Dr. Philipson is opposed to Zionism, while a number of the reform Jews are Zionists, and surely he cannot claim to represent the Zionists.

Dr. Philipson next makes a baseless charge against Chief Rabbi Silver and writes that the person in question (meaning Chief Rabbi Silver) was, as he (Dr. Philipson) understands it, the presiding officer of the Association of Orthodox Rabbis that Chief Rabbi Silver, is, therefore, now only an ex-President of that organization. Had Dr. Philipson made any attempt at all to find out the true facts, he would have learned that Chief Rabbi Silver not only has been the President of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada for the past three years, but is the President at the present time.

The union represents over 3,500 congregations, consisting of 90 per cent of the orthodox Jews of the United States and Canada, and the Presidency of the union always has carried with it the official title of Chief Rabbi of the Orthodox Jews of the United States and Canada, and the interpretations and decisions on Jewish laws and customs by the President are accepted as final by all these congregations.

As to his remarks regarding the Mikveh that this institution is entirely foreign to our modern interpretation of Jewish faith and practice, this is not the time and place to enter into a discussion of the Mikveh, which has been a basic law of the Jewish religion from its very beginning. Modifications of the Mikveh have been adopted by both the Christian and Mohammedan religions and I wish simply to call his attention to the fact that there are thousands of Mikvehs in the world today. The estimated number of Jews in the world is 14,000,000, and as reform is practically unknown outside of the United States and Germany and granting, for the sake of argument, that there are 1,000,000 reform Jews (the number is probably only half this), there are still 13,000,000 Jews in the world today who observe the laws of the Mikveh.

Dr. Philipson then follows this up with a very peculiar statement insinuating that the reform Jews of Cincinnati are the only ones who have been so largely instrumental in creating and maintaining that entente cordiale between Jews and non-Jews for which our city is so justly famous. We orthodox Jews strongly resent his claim that only reform Jewry has created and maintained this entente cordiale. The entire history of orthodox Judaism is one of loyalty to the Government and of goodwill and friendship to all our fellow men.

The early Jewish settlers of Cincinnati, among whom were my grandparents, were orthodox Jews and these Jews were the ones who laid the foundations for the remarkable goodwill between Jews and non-Jews in Cincinnati.

AARON Z. ISAACS.

President of the Vaad Ho'ier, the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of Greater Cincinnati.

May 9, 1932.



Allen A. Cowett (first row, second from right) at
army refugee reception center, Kilmer, NJ, 1957.
(Courtesy the author)

Cincinnati's Jews Respond to Holocaust Survivors after World War II (1952)

MARK COWETT

In the past two hundred or so years, immigration in the United States has been a hot-button issue for many reasons. Americans—and others throughout the world—have largely perceived the country as a welcoming land of plenty. “Let them come” has often been the generous denizen’s phrase. Yet other Americans have been afraid of immigrants—of too many “different-looking” and “foreign-sounding” types who threaten their ideas of the American crucible. And that says nothing of the multilayered challenges that immigrants’ arrivals have engendered, such as American labor needs, acculturation difficulties, and financial burdens associated with community and national institutions.¹

European immigrants after the Holocaust in 1945 and after the breakdown of the communist experiment in Russia in the 1970s have forced Americans to accept new Jewish arrivals. Recent literature about immigrant experiences and American responses—ranging from government policies, Jewish community actions, and “nativist” behaviors, as well as comparisons among those responses—have proliferated. Historians, journalists, and social workers have offered tomes detailing government and community welfare policies and attitudes throughout this period.

In this case, we look at the thoughts of one social worker, Allen A. Cowett of the Cincinnati Jewish Family Service, who offered in 1952 an analysis of Holocaust survivors’ and social workers’ feelings and thoughts after World War II.² This article represents one input into a line of

1 Arthur Mann, graduate school lectures, University of Chicago, October 1973. In the author’s possession.

2 Allen A. Cowett, “Case Work Elements in Dealing with Job Refusals by Newcomers,

Cincinnati Jewish community contributions to the history of social work in America.

In 1896 a Cincinnati-born and -bred businessman, Max Senior, and his friend and trained social worker, Boris D. Bogen, followed the early example of Boston and were among the first to federate Jewish social welfare agencies, combining eight agencies into the United Jewish Charities. Like his Progressive Era brethren, the forward-thinking Senior worked valiantly to develop social welfare efforts between 1900 and 1918 to advocate for tenement house legislation, a juvenile court system, several public health movements, low-cost public housing for poor African Americans, and welfare to help poor Jewish immigrants. Senior was also the prime force behind the early development of the National Conference of Jewish Charities between 1900 and 1914.³

Cincinnati's role as an advocate of diagnostic psychiatric treatment far outstripped its size in the late 1940s, as communities struggled to aid a group of traumatized immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe. The University of Cincinnati's Department of Psychiatry was among the best in the country, thanks to the efforts of a wonderful team of psychiatrists, most notably Drs. Maurice Levine, Paul Ornstein, and Anna Ornstein. Working with these psychiatrists, Cowett and his executive director at Jewish Family Service, Miriam Dettelbach, chose to accentuate the work of leading psychiatric theorists, including Sigmund Freud and Otto Rank. Between its highly qualified professionals and its commitment to this new immigrant community, the environment in Cincinnati was rife for providing excellent therapeutic care and analysis for its survivor community.⁴

The Jewish Social Service Quarterly 28 (June 1952): 428–433.

3 Senior and Bogen also advocated for the development of the first national Jewish social work school in Cincinnati in 1913–1914, an idea that did not come to fruition because of World War I. Finally, these two were sent by the most august Jews, such as Jacob Schiff and Louis Marshall, from New York in 1917 to administer funds to Jews in Germany and Eastern European lands from America during and after World War I.

4 Maurice Levine served as chair of the Department of Psychiatry at University of Cincinnati from 1947 to 1971. He was one of the first psychoanalytically trained psychiatrists to chair a psychiatry department. He was also the first administrator at the former Cincinnati General Hospital (now UC Hospital) to desegregate his wards and

According to Cowett, grave difficulties abounded for Holocaust survivors and case workers alike. European emigres—threatened, bullied, hounded, and decimated by family murders and deprivations—often came to the United States after 1946 with the rags on their backs and little else, and they faced terrible prejudice upon their arrival. The Displaced Persons’ Act of 1948, which capped Jewish immigration at 200,000 in 1948 and 400,000 in 1950, refused to allocate public relief for refugees because of nativist fears of further economic downturn and enormous public debt. Jewish communities, under the aegis of the Joint Distribution Committee, the Hebrew Aid Society, and, particularly, the United Service for New Americans, agreed to underwrite private campaigns. Communities throughout the United States were given allocations dependent on their size and their abilities to fund refugee settlement. Unfortunately, their efforts were sometimes meager, and, according to Cowett, psychological difficulties were too often ignored at the expense of quickly situating immigrants in jobs and housing.⁵

accept black resident son the hospital staff. Paul and Anna Ornstein, originally from Hungary, came to UC in 1955 when Levine recruited them. Paul worked as a professor of psychiatry and psychoanalysis. He challenged traditional Freudian analysis and pushed therapists to enter fully into their patients’ lives. He and his wife, Anna, published hundreds of articles and were nationally recognized. The Ornsteins were instrumental in helping to develop the self-psychology movement, a post-Freudian method developed by Heinz Kohut, which stressed empathy and a relational approach to provide a therapeutic cure. For the ideas of the psychiatrists, see Mary E. Rall, “The Casework Process in Work with the Children and Family in the Child’s Own Home,” *Social Service Review* 28, no. 3 (September 1954): 270–278; Stanley R. Block, “Maurice Levine, MD—Remembered,” *Henry R. Winkler Center Newsletter*, no. 2 (Summer/ Fall, 2010): 2; Maurice Levine Papers, University of Cincinnati, Health Services Library, Henry R. Winkler, Center for the History of the Health Professions Repository; Paul Ornstein with Helen Epstein, *Looking Back: Memoir of a Psychoanalyst* (Lexington, MA: Plunkett Lake Press, 2015); Sam Roberts, “Paul Ornstein, 92, Psychoanalyst and Holocaust Survivor, Dies,” *New York Times* (31 January 2017); Anna Ornstein, “Honoring Survivor Testimony on Yom HaShoah: An Interview with Dr. Anna Ornstein,” *Facing Today: A Facing History Blog*, 20 April 2020, <https://facingtoday.facinghistory.org/honoring-survivor-testimony-on-yom-hashoah-an-interview-with-dr-anna-ornstein> (accessed 6 April 2022); Anna Ornstein, “Mourning,” in *The Handbook of Psychoanalytic Holocaust Studies: International Perspectives* (Routledge, 2019).

5 See Leonard Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust* (New York:

The Cincinnati Jewish Family Service (JFS) agreed to accept about 80 cases of the 325 referrals that were made. The numbers were not large, according to their files, for several reasons: some refugees chose not to come; some did not receive aid from JFS; some had relatives who did not support their decision to emigrate; and some were stymied by government policies that rejected emigres coming from unacceptable parts of Europe. Moreover, the Cincinnati Jewish Welfare Fund had difficulty raising moneys. Board members of the Welfare Fund, including Jeffrey Lazarus, Philip Meyers, and Marjorie Kuhn, worked valiantly, but funds were often short.⁶

There were others issues, too. The board minutes of the United Jewish Social Agencies of Cincinnati refer to ongoing conflicts between the more established and wealthier German Jews and the Eastern European and Orthodox members of the community—a situation that may have discouraged potential givers. And finally, the small numbers of professional staff at JFS may have hindered efforts to deal with the enormity of problems after 1946. With only seven case workers, the caseloads were very heavy.⁷

Cowett, who came to Cincinnati in 1949 from Rochester, New York, was hired as case work director not only because of his MSW and case work training from Columbia University but also because of his fluent Yiddish, which his cohorts at JFS did not possess. Cowett's article speaks to his strong commitment to Freudian-based work principles in dealing with Holocaust survivors:

Columbia University Press, 1986); Oscar Handlin, *A Continuing Task: The American Joint Distribution Committee, 1914–1964* (New York: Random House, 1964); Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999); and Mark Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945–1951* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

6 See Jewish Family Service Collection, Intake Files, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH. See also Abraham J. Peck and Uri D. Herscher, eds., *Queen City Refuge: An Oral History of Cincinnati's Refugees from Nazi Germany* (West Orange, NJ: Behrman House, 1989).

7 Ibid.; and Donald N. Gluckman, "The Sociology of the Refugee: A Study of Jewish Family Service Bureau Records and Follow Up Interviews," rabbinic thesis, Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion (June, 1964), 1–95.

Work with the newcomer need not be different from work with many clients who have suffered much adversity. In achieving survival ... he acts and reacts according to his basic personality patterns, formed in his early years. These acts and reactions have been modified or exaggerated, perhaps, by war and post-war experiences; but they are not the result of them.

Clearly, his ideas on the Holocaust experience differed from later writers, who would pay far greater shrift to the uniqueness of the overwhelming Holocaust experience.⁸

Cowett is quite blunt as well as informative when speaking to the enormity of the Holocaust survivors' difficulties and, in particular, to their inability to move on with their lives. He mentions the less-than-favorable relief payments that were offered to survivors because case workers wanted to encourage them to become financially independent. He recognizes that in too many cases clients needed more than simple financial help to move on with their lives. They needed psychological counseling to utilize their own strengths and proclivities in Cincinnati. He also recognized that survivors often refused work because they no longer believed in future promises of other, more satisfactory work. Finally, Cowett understood that their being "unbending and inflexible" in accepting job offers gave them a way to assert control over their lives. Ironically, by offering these ideas, Cowett was admitting later in his article that the survivors' difficulties were a result of horrific Holocaust experiences.⁹

But Cowett's choice to share case workers' confusion and difficulties in treating Holocaust clients is very telling. It allows readers to see how overwhelmed even experienced therapists felt in dealing with these unique psychological problems. It allows us, too, to recognize that new financial demands on a private agency that had been the aegis of public welfare work since the New Deal in 1933 left workers full of doubt and sometimes unequipped to help terribly needy clients.

Moreover, by relating the successes and failures of the Cincinnati

8 Cowett, 429.

9 Cowett, 429–433.

case workers with Holocaust emigres, Cowett allows students of social work history to understand how the profession was evolving at the time. Diverse and sometimes negative American attitudes toward immigrants prevented acceptable amounts of public relief and forced underfunded private agencies to assume burdens for which they were unprepared. Cowett's article also shows the inadequacy of psychiatric principles as the foundation of case work theory and practice because, as he admits many times, their individual and group intake and therapy too often failed to help clients. Nevertheless, Cowett in the end is still protective of his and the agency's case work training. On the last page, he criticizes the inability of boards of the social work agencies that could not move beyond their view of Holocaust survivors as a group in order to help them as individuals: "We should use the same techniques and skills with him (the newcomer) as well as with others. It is always important to use sound diagnostic thinking, to clarify the agency's functions and our expectations of him."¹⁰

Cowett's article, then, provides a firsthand and extremely insightful examination of the Cincinnati Jewish Family Service, as well as the political and economic inputs into its work on behalf of Jewish immigrants of the time. As important, it may provide the basis to contrast those private and public efforts with those of Russian Jewish emigres after 1970 and immigrants from all over the world today.

Mark Cowett, PhD, taught at the university level and in private schools for forty years. He has written articles, reviews, and a monograph, Rabbi in Birmingham: Morris Newfield and Alabama, 1895–1940 that examine the history of American social work and American Jewish history from 1880 to today. His interests in part derive from his parents' work as social workers in Cincinnati from 1949 to 1985.

10 Cowett, 433.

Case Work Elements in Dealing with Job Refusals by Newcomers*

Allen A. Cowett

Jewish Family Service Bureau, Cincinnati, Ohio

The problem of integrating the newcomer of the post-war period into the life of an American community as a responsible, mature individual and member of that community has placed a great burden on the agencies which have accepted this responsibility. The search for answers to accomplish this end has often been frustrating and productive of many hours of added staff discussions and work, to the minimizing or exclusion of regularly recognized community agency programs. In our agency in Cincinnati, we have estimated recently that 40 per cent of total agency time was being spent on the emigre program. Other Jewish family agencies have found, too, that they are spending an equal or greater amount of time in this work. What are the elements inherent in this situation?

It is my feeling that basically work with the newcomer need not be different from work with many clients who have suffered much adversity, whether from loss of employment in the long depression, family breakdown, war casualties, or similar traumatic experiences. It is true that the newcomer has lost everything—family, home, roots and a sense of belonging. He has often been hunted, beaten and starved. He comes to the agency not knowing the language and with a need to come to terms and integrate his past experiences with his hopes for the future. The important factor is that he has survived, survived by whatever means served him best, bowing to or overcoming adversity. In achieving survival and in rebuilding his life in America, he acts and reacts according to his basic personality patterns, formed in his early years. These actions and reactions have been modified or exaggerated, perhaps, by war and post-war experiences; but they are not the result of them. He looks upon the agency as his caretaker, may see the worker as a [*sic*] withholding

* Article first appeared in *Jewish Social Service Quarterly* 28 (June 1952): 428–433. Permission to reprint by JPRO Network.

authority or as a lenient parent. He accepts the agency and worker in the light of his own personality needs and past experiences, sometimes with distrust, sometimes with dependence and sometimes with an inability to use any help because of deep sense of guilt over his own survival when other members of his family have been exterminated. It is not uncommon for us to find two members of the same family who have been through similar experiences and have come here together, reacting in quite contrasting fashion. One sees the agency as a place to meet only a few basic minimum needs, then leaves it and strikes out on his own, independently, very quickly; the other, however, looks to the agency for much more. He is dependent, complains constantly, asks for special consideration and hesitates to go out on his own. Not only are there marked differences between individuals, but within the same individual we often find deep seated feelings of ambivalence—encompassing on the one hand a great need for dependence on the agency and at the same time a definite desire to be free of agency control. To the agency, therefore, each emigre needs to be recognized as an individual not a member of a group. In learning to know him and understand his basic personality structure—to accept the newcomer for what he is, to accept and explore his feelings, his ideas and plans for the future and where he needs help—lies the problem of the agency, as it does with other clients.

From the point of view of the agency, what then is different about this newcomer? What is different, is first, the number who come to us and second, the kind of initial problems with which he comes. The first factor is obvious and needs no further explanation here. It is the type and urgency of problems the newcomer presents that we have to examine more fully. The newcomer needs three basic material items immediately—food, housing and clothing and continues to need these until he can achieve a way of earning his own livelihood.

With the Displaced Persons Act, the Jewish community promised to care for immigrants and established the émigré program. The private Jewish Agency as surrogate for the community had to take on the responsibility as agent of the community for meeting economic need. It is extremely significant for us that the private agency had not considered the meeting of such material needs its primary function for some time. Since the

establishment of government's responsibility for meeting economic need in the 1930's, private agencies had been free to place their main emphasis on the problems of the individual's emotional and social adjustment. Confronted with the new emigre program, we were repeating history and coping with the problem of maintenance relief and environmental manipulation, on a large scale.

What did this mean to the agency? It required the establishment of good relief standards and sound agency policies. In our agency where professional staff participates in policy-making, we struggled with ideas and problems of how liberal we should be with our relief budget. The difference in the use of relief to meet special needs in a counselling situation, and the granting of relief for maintenance was a factor we could not afford to under-emphasize, because it created confusion and conflict within ourselves. All of us had resented low public budgets for years and wanted a good over-all budget. Professional honesty would not allow us to accept the public relief standards which were woefully inadequate. But we had to be realistic. The newcomer had lived a dependent life for years. It would not be wise for us to create such a high standard that he would not be able to meet this with his own earnings for a considerable length of time. Also it would not be fair to the newcomer to instill any doubt of adequacy, i.e., doubt of his ability to earn what the agency considered necessary for him. We created, therefore, a budget based on standards suggested by qualified home economists and deemed adequate for maintenance of healthy living but which could still be met by most wage earners in this group, barring emergencies and extensive medical care. After the establishment of our budget guide, many other problems were thought through, such as housing, furniture needs and indebtedness. Definite policies on all these were discussed and created.

This type of work was new and foreign to some workers. It meant, among other things, learning new skills in the use of money. It was important for them to examine more carefully their own feelings about money so they could be as objective as possible in granting or denying aid. It meant learning to be skillful and flexible in the application of budgets and related policies; learning better how to interpret agency functions, and meeting frequent and new kinds of pressure. To others,

work with emigres brought back memories of relief days, with their pressures, frustrations and limitations. It brought back memories of anonymous complaints about people who were working and receiving aid from undisclosed resources; community complaints about giving “unworthy” individuals relief, and conversely, complaints about not giving aid to “worthy” individuals. They knew there would be complaints by the clients that the agency and worker were discriminating against them. In short, it meant relearning much that they had left behind purposely because it had been distasteful to them or because the agency had given over its major relief role to the governmental agencies.

Setting up budget formulae and policies simplified the worker’s task some but did not necessarily satisfy the clients. Initially, the workers found many newcomers rejecting budget discussion, housing limitations, furniture offered, etc., but at the same time making constant complaints and demands in all areas. Little movement was seen even though the worker had gone “all out” for the newcomers. Though the workers realized that there was more than reality need behind the emigre’s complaints and demands, they discovered it was difficult to learn what it was, or what to do about it. Though they tried to get underneath the expressed feelings, tried to focus on how the newcomer had related to similar situations and people, they were often rebuffed. This inability or lack of readiness of many newcomers to establish a meaningful relationship tended to discourage workers further.

In addition, to most case workers participation in the emigre program meant less time for that type of work with which they were most familiar—treatment through counselling with only occasional relief-giving, that type of work in which they had experience, skills and security. This “new” work created anxiety, tension and often hostility in the case worker.

All of these feelings together prevented workers from seeing the client objectively. They wanted to help the newcomer become financially independent, yet when he reached that point, they had conflicts about allowing him to go his own way. Workers became over-protective and wanted to be certain that the displaced person would not get into difficulty. Their own guilt feelings over their hostility to the newcomer

and their own disappointment in not understanding him, prevented them from letting the client go. Significantly, workers often hesitated closing their cases even though the newcomer was employed and had discontinued contact with the agency.

In our anxiety and confusion about this unfamiliar work, we ran into a good deal of difficulty in helping the newcomer move toward self-support. We knew that part of his responsibility and new reality was to secure employment as soon as possible, even though for some clients it might be hard to face work and assume support of himself and his family. In our fear of having large and long-time relief loads, we began to make quick referrals to our Jewish Vocational Service, very often too quick. Also, in our anxiety, we often worked routinely; our interviews with the emigre did not measure up to those with our American clientele. We often took at face value the USNA statement of job classification and did not take into account the newcomer's previous background, work history and his plans for the future. In short, we did not take sufficient time to prepare the emigre for facing his new realities which included employment and self-maintenance.

Many clients were therefore confused about the responsibilities expected of them. In their insecurity they became defensive, hostile and refused jobs. We recognize quite early that our program was failing: our relief roles were large as were JVS's unemployed lists. Prospective employers complained that the newcomer did not want to work, was lazy, and created discontent in his immediate groups in employment by constantly complaining about and demanding more money. The staffs of both agencies came together in a conference and shared all views on the newcomer and the program. We all recognized how important it was to have a better understanding of the individual if we were to help him use his own strengths toward self-direction and support. Our agency accepted the need to make a more careful study of the newcomer, to prepare him for job referral and to be sure he was ready for employment before we sent him to the JVS. The JVS promised to make every effort to place the client in the type of work he wanted and for which he was best fitted, if possible, and to discuss limitations of the newcomer with prospective employers. We both agreed that early and thorough sharing

of our respective information about the client was vitally important to successful work in our program.

With better preparation of the newcomer, 90%, though dependent in many ways, expressed a willingness to work. But the expression was not always what it seemed. Many clients did not go to work quickly; they set limitations on the type of employment and rates of pay. If the type of employment was right, they would hesitate to accept a rate of pay less than the equivalent of or slightly more than they received from the agency. If the pay was satisfactory, they claimed they had training and wanted to work only in their own trade. Some felt that they had to be completely self-supporting or wholly dependent on the agency.

What was implicit in these limitations? First, some were in a hurry to make up lost time. A job with which they were familiar, at a high level of pay, would help to bolster their egos and status. Second, clients who would need supplementation did not believe our promise that we would give it. Their whole experience during the war years indicated that they could not accept promises. Third, a few who rejected partial financial help showed that they were fearful of sharing responsibility, were unready to understand our philosophy of self-help and the relationship aspect of case work. Fourth, some were not ready to go to work and needed extended case work or psychiatric help. Fifth, a number had gone through so much struggle in order to survive that their own wills made them unbending and inflexible in accepting any employment except on their own terms. Sixth, there were others who believed the agency and community owed them a living because of the severe indignities and deprivations they had suffered.

Understanding and working with the newcomers on these various reasons for job refusal did not always result in success. We decided, therefore, to supplement the efforts of the individual case worker by development of a group program. In cooperation with JVS and the Cincinnati Jewish Center, group meetings of the DP's were planned. Our purpose was to discover, if possible, what was behind the hostility many were exhibiting, to learn what they were expecting and to interpret to them as a group that all were being treated equally with regard to budget,

policies and eligibility rules. We hoped to dissipate some hostility and distrust, and to determine if group participation would help solve our problem of job refusals.

Though attendance was voluntary in the semi-monthly meetings, they were well-attended and interest was good. At these meetings, we explained that the Emigre Committee of the city was an individual body and had no connection with the "Joint." We told about and explained the work of the family agency, its regulations, resources and limitations. The JVS representative told of his agency's function, how the agency operated, how jobs were secured, rates of pay, and about union restrictions. All questions but those of purely individual nature were answered. As a result of our meetings, most newcomers learned and accepted that the restrictions placed on them were not personal restrictions; that agency limitations had been set for all so that all who were here and would come later could be cared for adequately. Some accepted work as a result of these meetings, some did not.

With the newcomers who still refused to take jobs, we tried other means, we rechecked physical health, JVS offered new jobs, but still our efforts were not completely successful. We again analyzed the problem and concluded that perhaps for the individual who still refused work, freedom of choice was confusing. His cultural mores were founded in the authority of the family and the state. This could mean that self-determination was a factor with which he was unfamiliar and with which he could not cope. It might be more comfortable and helpful for him if the case worker were to set defined limits.

All of us felt deeply the emigre's problem. We had seen, heard or read of his bitter experiences. We felt we could accept him as a person with feelings. We knew, however, we should not accept his unjustifiable refusal of work if we were to help him function as a mature individual. Was this different from loving and accepting a child as an individual but not accepting destructive behavior? Was there any difference between our professional acceptance of an unmarried mother and her feelings which led her to this state and yet not accepting the continuation of her asocial acts? We thought not. If we accepted this premise, we needed to set realistic limits for the newcomer.

However, since many case workers felt insecure in the use of limits and authority and were concerned about community reaction if financial assistance were withdrawn, we went to our Board with two specific problems:

- 1) We raised the question of long time support in a training program. The Board concurred in our recommendation that support should be withdrawn when the newcomer was sufficiently trained for employment which would be available and would pay the equivalent of or more than the relief granted by the agency.
- 2) The second problem was the refusal by families to accept housing facilities which would reduce agency expenditures. The Board again concurred with our thinking that agency assistance could be withdrawn in any situation where unreasonable action by a client would result in the expenditure of unnecessary agency funds.

We had our direction charted—when it would help the newcomer move toward self-mobilization, assistance could be withheld. Most emigres had come to accept budget limitations, rental restrictions, the keeping of appointments on time with us and clinics. If they could adjust to these, we felt they should be able to adjust to the necessity of accepting employment, though a specific job might not meet preconceived ideas of employment.

We decided that we could not realistically support a physically and emotionally fit newcomer who refused to work. If we continued to support him, we knew it would be damaging to him, to other newcomers and to our relationship with the community at large. In each situation of a job refusal, we tried to understand and help the newcomer work through his reasons for such action. If he resisted our efforts to help in this way, we discussed the discontinuing of financial support and explained the position of jeopardy in which he was placing himself. Some responded, accepted referrals for employment and went to work. Others made us take the final drastic step of discontinuing all aid before they accepted a referral for employment.

I would like to cite one situation where the use of limits helped a newcomer:

Mr. L, 38 years old, is a physically fit and emotionally stable man. He had been a professional soccer player whose previous work experiences were determined on the basis of which factories would pay him most to play on their subsidized teams.

Mr. L insisted either upon work as a welder or upon our support during a training program for this work, because he had a few months experience in it during his D.P. days. He knew it paid well. JVS informed us that Mr. L's skills were so limited that it would take many months of training before he could even be placed as a beginner. They suggested free training through night public school courses when he knew English better and offered him other employment.

Mr. L refused to move toward alternate employment until we proposed to withhold financial assistance. Though he boasted he had gone through so much from the Nazis that our taking away "this little bit" of relief would not harm him, he came to the office the day after his relief was due and accepted referral to employment.

When he was asked why he had struggled so, he replied, "I tried to get all I could. When I saw it wasn't possible, I stopped trying. It is really time for me to go to work. I'm tired of doing nothing all day."

Each emigre needs to be recognized as an individual with a distinct personality structure. The large number of emigres who come to the community plus the responsibility of the private agency in the area of relief-giving has created many difficulties in dealing with the newcomer, i.e., a tendency to think in terms of the group rather than of the individual. In so doing, the primary basis for understanding and treatment is lost. It creates, too, ambivalence within the case worker, encompassing a feeling of frustration aroused by insecurity in this unfamiliar area of work, and inability to establish relationship with the newcomer coupled with a feeling of over-protectiveness.

The only real difference between the newcomer and other clients is his need for financial assistance. We should use the same techniques and skills with him as with others. It is always important to use sound diagnostic thinking, to clarify for him the agency's functions and our expectations of him; and we need security in being firm in carrying through these plans.



Miriam Belle Urban.
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

Live for the Wonder: One Letter Opens Up the Life of Dr. Miriam Belle Urban (1953)

ANNE DELANO STEINERT AND DIVYA KUMAR

In November of 1950, Jacob Rader Marcus, founder of the American Jewish Archives (AJA) and noted scholar of American Jewish history, wrote a letter in which he described “probably the best historian in the Cincinnati community,” who was “widely sought after as a speaker” and “widely conceded to be the most popular lecturer in the social sciences on the university campus.”¹

Marcus wrote the letter, now held in his papers at the AJA, to the Fulbright committee in Washington, DC, to recommend his colleague and friend, Dr. Miriam Urban, for a year’s study in France. He wrote that Urban had “a wide and intimate knowledge of current affairs and [was] well versed on almost all questions dealing with foreign policy ... a vibrant, dynamic personality and ... a great deal of charm.”² This glowing tribute from one well-known scholar praised another we now barely remember. By the time he wrote this recommendation, Marcus had known sixty-four-year-old Urban for thirty-five years.³ But who was she? The letter at the AJA inspires us to revisit Urban and remember her many gifts.

1 Jacob Rader Marcus to Conference Board of American Research Councils, 1 November 1950, MS-210, box 9, folder 1, The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio (hereafter AJA).

2 Ibid.

3 Urban’s birth year has been recorded as both 1886 and 1888. The 1886 date, which would make her sixty-four years old in 1950, is somewhat more likely. She first met Marcus when they were both undergraduates at the University of Cincinnati sometime between 1913 and 1915. *Cincinnati*, 1915: 57, 84, 223, 299 and Marcus to Conference Board, 1 November 1950, MS-210, box 9, folder 1, AJA.

Miriam Belle Urbansky (later Urban) was born in Piqua, Ohio, the youngest of twelve children of Prussian immigrants Rachel Henry and David Urbansky.⁴ Her father served the Union Army in the 58th Ohio volunteer infantry and is one of only six known Jews decorated in the Civil War, receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor, now held by the AJA, “for gallantry at Shiloh and Vicksburg.”⁵ Miriam graduated from Piqua High School in 1905, then moved to Cincinnati with her family, residing first on Forest Avenue and later Burton Avenue in Avondale.⁶ She studied music at the Metropolitan College of Music in Mount Auburn, earning a degree in 1909 before beginning her lifelong connection to the University of Cincinnati.⁷ Even after she became a scholar in history, she continued to perform and teach music. She even led the children’s choir at Plum Street Temple for a time.⁸

Marcus first met Urbansky when they were both students at UC. In 1915 Marcus was a sophomore on the leadership team of the Menorah Society for “the advancement of Jewish culture and ideals,” while Urbansky, a senior, held the University’s DAR Fellowship and served as president of the History Club.⁹ After receiving a bachelor of arts

4 1900 U.S. census, Washington County, Ohio, population schedule, enumeration district 90, sheet 7, dwelling 1119, family 192, Urbansky. The Urbansky family changed their family name around the time of World War I. “Four Change Name,” *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune* (4 September 1918): 10; 1920 U.S. census, Hamilton County, Ohio, population schedule, enumeration district 239, sheet 8-9, dwelling 84, family 98, Urbansky and Urban.

5 Stanley F. Chyet, “Ohio Valley Jewry During the Civil War,” *Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 21, no. 3 (July 1963): 179–187; Cliff Radel, “Overdue Honors for Unknown Hero,” *Cincinnati Enquirer* (11 December 2000): A1.

6 “Piqua High School Graduates—Class of 1905,” *Piqua Leader Dispatch* (Piqua, Ohio) (7 June 1905): 1; 1920 U.S. census, Hamilton County, Ohio, population schedule, enumeration district 239, sheet 8-9, dwelling 84, family 98, Urbansky and Urban; 1930 U.S. census, Hamilton County, Ohio, population schedule, enumeration district 38-148, sheet 11B, dwelling 140, family 310, Urban.

7 “Music Graduates Receive Diplomas,” *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune* (13 June 1909): 30.

8 Urbansky even wrote a Sukkot operetta for the children’s choir in 1914; “Plum Street Temple Sisterhood,” *American Israelite* (8 October 1914): 6; “Plum Street Temple,” *American Israelite* (22 October 1914): 6.

9 *Cincinnatiian*, 1915: 57, 84, 223, 229; Marcus to Conference Board, 1 November 1950, MS-210, box 9, folder 1, AJA.

(1915) and master's (1917) from UC and doing her doctoral work at Columbia University, Miriam Urban joined the faculty of UC's history department.¹⁰ She served UC from 1920 to 1953 and became the first woman in the history department to achieve the rank of full professor in 1944.¹¹ This pioneering woman taught courses in European history for more than thirty years. Some of her more compelling course titles were "Europe Under the Benevolent Bourgeoisie," "Europe: The Conflict Between the Old and the New World Orders," and "Evolution of Russia, from Peter the Great to Stalin."¹² Her students remembered her as vibrant, dynamic, and brilliant.

Urban also lectured widely outside of the classroom.¹³ Today we might call her UC's first public historian. Hundreds of newspaper articles recount more than two hundred speaking engagements to civic, educational, political, and religious organizations starting before World War I and continuing into the Cold War. The vast majority of these talks were to women's organizations, including the League of Women Voters, the local Council of Jewish Women, the Republican Women's Club, and the Cincinnati Business Women's Club.¹⁴ She often spoke on international affairs, using history to contextualize current events. She was committed to helping those outside the academy, especially women, use history to make sense of their present. As a scholar of European history and international relations, titles of her talks were often strikingly prescient.

10 University of Cincinnati Twenty-Seventh and Twenty-Ninth Annual Commencement program, University of Cincinnati Digital Resource Commons; University of Cincinnati Board of Trustees Minutes 1919–1922, vol. 10, p. 200, June 1920, University of Cincinnati Archives and Rare Books Library (hereafter UC Archives).

11 University of Cincinnati Board of Trustees Minutes 1919–1922, vol. 10, p. 200, June 1920, UC Archives; "Dr. Miriam B. Urban Retires at UC and Will Live in Paris," *American Israelite* (28 May 1953): 8.

12 University of Cincinnati Course Catalogues 1920–1948, UC Archives.

13 Henry R. Winkler, "Miriam B. Urban Memorial Fund," *Perspectives* 1 no. 1 (Fall 1982); and student reflections in the collection of the UC Archives, Miriam B. Urban Faculty Bio File.

14 The authors uncovered more than two hundred newspaper notices of talks Urban gave between 1925 and 1953 through an exhaustive search of the *Cincinnati Enquirer* and a partial search of the *American Israelite*.

Paris June 29-53 4 rue de Choiseul

my dear Jake -
 I am happy with your letter, ^{with} brief though it is, but the mournful tone of the long farewell - why. I will be back in the States in a year or a little more. At that time I will not have accomplished what I hope to accomplish, I can always return to France.

It is, without a doubt, a very mad world. Whatever will come of it all, cannot be imagined - The tragedy for me is, I will not live to see the wonder of the final (or temporary) adjustment. France now has a government of sorts, evolved as the result of sheer fatigue. Our President and his advisers are not held in high esteem. Respect for us as a people, has reached a new low. However, Paris is beautiful, there is so much to see, such a sense of timelessness and immortality, that I forget all the latent hostility.

And I trust matters are going well with you and that Mrs Marcus is better -
 My love to you
 MIRIAM

Letter from Miriam Urban to Jacob R. Marcus, 26 June 1953.
 (Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

For example, in November of 1945 she gave a talk to the local Council of Jewish Women at the Wise Center titled “Can the United States and Russia Co-Operate?”¹⁵ Newspapers sometimes announced that her public lectures were being moved to larger venues because the crowds would overflow the original sites, cramming in to hear her speak.¹⁶

Upon retirement Urban joined three of her siblings in California.¹⁷ She bought a ranch house in Palo Alto, where she lived until her death in 1977 at eighty-nine (or ninety-one) years of age.¹⁸ She left more than \$100,000 to the University of Cincinnati’s library to purchase books on the history of Europe; yet beyond a plaque on the second floor of Langsam Library, Urban’s contributions have been largely forgotten.¹⁹

Marcus’s letter worked, and Urban won a Fulbright. In September 1951 she set sail for eleven months in France. In January 1952 she wrote to her friend “Jake” from Tours that life in France was “simply fantastic.”²⁰ He responded with “much affection” and encouraged her to “Enjoy yourself while you can.”

There is much to be learned from Urban’s model. She gave freely of her time and knowledge. She was a lifelong learner, forever curious about what would come next. In 1953, as the Cold War deepened and many Americans were surely filled with dread, she wrote to Jake: “It is, without a doubt, a very mad world. Whatever will come of it all, cannot be imagined—the tragedy for me is, I will not live to see the wonder of the final (or temporary) adjustment.”²¹

15 “Historian, Psychiatrist, Artist to be Heard in Council Lecture Series,” *American Israelite* (1 November 1945): 4.

16 “Council of Jewish Women,” *Cincinnati Enquirer* (10 November 1929): 90.

17 Urban’s siblings Saul and Rebecca are listed in the 1969 Palo Alto city directory, while her sister Bertha’s 1957 obituary in the *Cincinnati Enquirer* listed her place of residence as San Francisco.

18 Miriam Urban appears in the Palo Alto city directories at 557 Hilbar Lane consistently from 1956 to 1976. Her date of birth is listed as either 1886 or 1888 on official documents, so her exact age is uncertain.

19 See dedication program, UC Archives, Miriam B. Urban Faculty Bio File.

20 MS-210, box 9, folder 1, AJA.

21 Miriam B. Urban to Jacob R. Marcus, 14 January 1952, MS-210, box 9, folder 1, AJA.

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Divya Kumar is a fourth-year undergraduate at the University of Cincinnati majoring in history and minoring in Spanish. Her focus is on local and university history. Outside of classes, she competes on the University of Cincinnati mock trial team as an attorney and will be working as an intern in the Fifth Third Bank history museum this fall.

Chofetz Chaim–Yavneh Day School Merger Attempt (1959–1968)

JONATHAN KRASNER

Although a handful of Jewish day schools were created in the first decades of the twentieth century—mostly in the New York metropolitan area—the period between the late 1930s and mid-1960s witnessed exponential growth in the number of day schools across the continental United States and Canada. In 1940 there were about thirty-five schools in four American states and two Canadian provinces, enrolling approximately 7,700 students. By 1964 there were more than three hundred schools in twenty-nine states and five provinces serving more than 65,000 students. While the baby boom, Jewish migration to the suburbs, and a postwar religious revival accounted for some of the overall growth in the Jewish education sector during this period, the growth in day school enrollment significantly outpaced that of supplementary schools, even outside of New York. Jewish day school enrollments also grew faster than Catholic parochial schools during these decades. Various factors contributed to this rapid growth, including a growing interest in preserving Jewish culture and religious life after the Holocaust, excitement surrounding the creation of Israel, and the post-World War II immigration of Holocaust refugees who had little allegiance to the American public school system.¹

Two day schools were founded in Cincinnati during these years. In 1946 Rabbi Eliezer Silver, the city's leading Orthodox rabbi, founded Chofetz Chaim Day School, known today as the Cincinnati Hebrew Day School (CHDS), in the community of Avondale. Eight years later, in 1952, a group of Labor Zionists led by Joseph Gootman established

1 Alvin Schiff, *The Jewish Day School in America* (New York: Jewish Education Committee Press, 1966), 48–49; 74–78.

Yavneh Day School, known today as Rockwern Academy, also in Avondale. Some of these individuals, including Gootman, initially supported Chofetz Chaim but soured on the school due to its non-Zionism and insufficient emphasis on modern Hebrew language and culture. Yavneh was conceived as a community school, and while it took a sympathetic approach to religious practice, it declined to affiliate with any religious movement. The focus of its Judaic studies program was on Hebrew language, Jewish literature and culture, and Israel.²

The existence of two day schools in a Jewish community the size of Cincinnati was unusual, and both struggled to attract enough students to remain financially viable. Silver and the leaders of Chofetz Chaim felt particularly aggrieved, since theirs was the first institution. Although their school was under strict Orthodox auspices, it welcomed the children of non-Orthodox families. Initially, Yavneh's founders were able to mitigate some of the criticism by insisting that it was a K–3 foundation school. But in 1958–1959, Yavneh moved to the Roselawn Talmud Torah building, in the heart of Cincinnati's fastest-growing cluster of Jewish neighborhoods, and began adding a grade each year, with the intention of growing into a full elementary school. Chofetz Chaim, meanwhile, was still in Avondale—which by then was hemorrhaging Jewish families to points north—and struggling to attract students. An alarmed Silver attempted to shut Yavneh down or force a merger between the schools in 1959, when he summoned Yavneh's president, Morris Weintraub, to a *din Torah*, a hearing before an Orthodox rabbinical court (see Document 1). The charge was *hasagat gvul*, a rabbinic prohibition against unfair business practices. Weintraub, who had no intention of facing off against Silver in an ostensibly hostile arena, waited more than two weeks before responding to Silver's letter and then insisted that he could not act while most of his board members were vacationing outside the city (see Document 2). But the letter indicates that Weintraub tried to diffuse the situation by meeting personally with

2 Unless otherwise noted, background on the founding and early development of Yavneh comes from Daniel Plotkin, "A History of the Yavneh Day School of Cincinnati, Ohio," unpublished rabbinic thesis, 2002, Hebrew Union College, SC-14946, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH (hereafter AJA).

Silver and reassuring him that Yavneh's board did not wish to harm the Chofetz Chaim school. Indeed, in the view of Yavneh's lay leaders, the two schools were too different in ideology and curriculum to be viewed as direct competitors. Despite the incendiary nature of Silver's missive, Weintraub kept his letter cordial, signing it "your friend, as ever." Silver ultimately changed tack and addressed his school's demographic challenges by following Yavneh's example and relocating Chofetz Chaim to Roselawn in 1963. As part of the move, Chofetz Chaim merged with an afternoon school, Yeshiva Eitz Chaim, and officially became known the Cincinnati Hebrew Day School, although the name Chofetz Chaim continued to be used colloquially and in some correspondence.

Even so, both schools continued to struggle to attract students. In 1965–1966 there were seventy-one students enrolled in grades 1–8 at CHDS and seventy students at Yavneh in grades 1–6. Yet both were receiving allocations from the community's Jewish Welfare Fund, covering between one-quarter and one-third of their operating costs.³ Officials at the JWF (and, later, the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati) believed that a merger of the two schools would create one viable, economically efficient entity. They predicted that the resulting efficiencies and economies of scale would save thousands of dollars. Yavneh's board attempted to cut costs through a merger with the Cincinnati Community Hebrew Schools (CCHS) in 1962, which allowed the schools to share administrative, teaching, and facility costs.⁴ But the JWF continued to push for a merger of CHDS and Yavneh.

While negotiations continued on and off over the next decade, they reached their most serious point in the mid-to-late 1960s.⁵ Two of the

3 "Digest of Information Supplied by Witnesses Appearing Before the Study Committee of Community Hebrew Schools on the Subject of Merger with Community Hebrew Day Schools," 29 December 1965, MS-726, box 47, folder 3, AJA.

4 "Community Schools, Yavneh Day School Announce Merger," *American Israelite* (15 March 1962): 1.

5 See, for example, "Digest of Information"; "Report of the Community Hebrew Schools Merger Study Committee," January, 1966; Stanley Chyet, "Report by Chairman, Cincinnati Community Hebrew Schools Merger Negotiation Committee," 17 July 1966; Stanley Chyet, "Report by Chairman, CCHS Merger Negotiations Committee," 10 October 1966; "Minutes of a Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Consolidation of Day

most prominent rabbis in the community, Rabbi Fishel Goldfeder of the Conservative Congregation Adath Israel and Rabbi David Indich of the Orthodox Golf Manor Synagogue, negotiated a merger proposal, with the support of the JWF, which was circulated in 1966 (see Document 3). The document is interesting because it provides insight into how two relatively moderate community leaders tried to bridge the ideological and philosophical gaps between the institutions. On its face, the proposal required more concessions from Yavneh than the CHDS. The phenomenon of a community school deferring to the religious requirements of its most traditionally observant constituents was not unusual. Many day schools that were created in the 1940s and 1950s were nominally Orthodox while catering to a religiously diverse clientele. But in this case, where two schools already existed, any attempt to create a broadly acceptable community school model was more controversial. In a concession to the Orthodox camp, the proposed school would be modern Orthodox in religious orientation and practice, and all of its religious studies staff would be Torah observant. The key provisions designed to attract Yavneh supporters involved the centrality of Hebrew and the school's Zionist orientation. While the word *Zionist* does not appear in the document, the schools identified as providing curricular models for the proposed institution were all religious Zionist in orientation. Likewise, the stipulation that the school's director be an observant Jew and a fluent Hebrew speaker all but guaranteed the selection of a religious Zionist.

Goldfeder's openness to a single day school under Orthodox supervision makes sense in historical context. As Jonathan Sarna observed, despite its affiliation with United Synagogue of America, Adath Israel had "for many years walked a tightrope between the Conservative and Orthodox movements."⁶ When the congregation's board voted in 1952

Schools," 2 July 1968; "Statement on Yavneh Day School by CCHS Representatives on the Jewish Federation Sub-Committee on Consolidation of Day Schools," 16 July 1968; "Minutes of a Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Consolidation of Day Schools," 25 July 1968; all in MS-726, box 47, folder 3, AJA.

6 Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Debate Over Mixed Seating in the American Synagogue," in *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (New York:

to institute mixed seating, opponents initiated a lawsuit. In the wake of that bruising battle, Goldfeder craved “Achdut (Unity) and the well-being of the entire Jewish community.” But the lay leadership of both Yavneh and CHDS did not share his accommodationist mindset. On the CHDS side, a small but growing middle-class Orthodox laity exhibited a newfound confidence in the durability of Orthodoxy on the suburban frontier.⁷ Yavneh’s emphasis on Jewish culture, *Klal Yisrael* (Jewish peoplehood), and Israel, as well its sympathetic but nondogmatic approach to Jewish belief and observance, won it an eclectic group of supporters, including Zionists, Conservative Jews, and even some members of Cincinnati’s Reform community. It is notable that at a time when the Reform movement declined to endorse day schools, (Zionist) members of the Hebrew Union College faculty, including Drs. Ezra Spicehandler, Ben Zion Wacholder, and Stanley Chyet, sent their children to Yavneh and were involved in the lay leadership of the school. The latter served as chair of the Yavneh committee charged with studying the merger proposal and was involved in the negotiations. Even Jacob R. Marcus, a longtime opponent of day schools, returned from a trip to Yavneh impressed by the academic program and convinced that “it is a most worthwhile undertaking.” Explaining to Chyet that, “What pleases me in particular is the school’s dedication to a liberal view of Judaism and Jewish life,” Marcus made a donation to Yavneh and wrote a letter to leaders of the JWF opposing the merger and insisting on both schools’ unique contributions (see Document 4).⁸

In 1967 the JWF and the Associated Jewish Agencies merged into the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati, and talk of merger between the two schools entered a new phase. The Federation commissioned the American Association for Jewish Education (AAJE) to study the day school situation in Cincinnati. In a strongly worded report, the AAJE panel concluded that the schools were ideologically and philosophically

Cambridge University Press, 1987), 382–383.

7 An early observer of this general phenomenon was sociologist Charles Liebman. See “Orthodoxy in American Jewish Life,” *American Jewish Year Book* 66 (1965): 21–92.

8 Jacob R. Marcus to Stanley Chyet, 24 May 1966; Morris Weintraub to Jacob R. Marcus, 30 October 1967, MS-726, box 47, folder 3, AJA.

too far apart to effect a successful merger (see Document 5). Moreover, it recognized the determined lay leadership of both schools, steering their institutions in very different directions. The AAJE recommended that the Federation support both schools for a period of three years and then evaluate the health of each institution and determine whether conditions were riper for a merger.

The merger talks were an occasion for both schools to clarify their missions and values. By the 1970s enrollment at both schools was growing, and each was becoming more ideologically distinctive. The opening of non-Orthodox day schools in other Rust Belt Jewish communities, including Hillel Day School in Detroit (1958), Agnon Day School in Cleveland (1969), and the Community Day School in Pittsburgh (1972), helped to normalize the existence of Cincinnati's two Jewish day schools in the eyes of Federation leaders. But they were quick to point out that those Jewish communities were far larger than Cincinnati.⁹ It was the anomalous nature of Jewish Cincinnati, as a center of Labor Zionist activity and the seat of the Hebrew Union College, that facilitated Yavneh's founding and contributed to its viability. Both CHDS and Yavneh proved themselves to be enduring institutions on Cincinnati's Jewish landscape.

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9 Federation officials continued to promote dialogue between the schools and remained committed to the idea of merger. Jewish Federation of Cincinnati Minutes, Day Schools Merger, 8 July 1969, MS-726, box 47, folder 3, AJA.

Yavneh–Chofetz Chaim Merger

Document 1:

Rabbi Eliezer Silver Summons Yavneh Day School's President to a Rabbinical Hearing¹⁰

August 2, 1959

Mr. Morris Weintraub¹¹

One of the leaders of the so-called Yavneh Day School, Cincinnati
Finance Building
Newport, Ky.

My dear Mr. Weintraub:

I am compelled to send you a summons in the name of the orthodox Rabbis of Cincinnati and of the Board of Education of the Chofetz Chaim Day School to have a *Din Torah* “rabbinical trial”¹² to decide if you have the right to lead the Yavneh as a separate Day School in opposition *Hasagath Gvul*¹³ to the Chofetz Chaim Day School which exists and is incorporated since twelve years and which the orthodox City recognizes as the best Hebrew School in town.

The Yavneh can help *Chas-vsholom* [Heaven forbid] to destroy or to minimize the Chofetz Chaim Day School.

10 MS-851, box 4, AJA.

11 Morris Weintraub (1909–1996), a lawyer and politician, was the founding president of Yavneh Day School. A Democrat, he served in the Kentucky State Senate from 1940–1945 and the Kentucky House of Representatives from 1946–1960. He also served as Speaker of the Kentucky House of Representatives from 1958–1960. He had deep ties to Newport’s casino industry and counted numerous gambling figures among his clients. He was able to use these connections to raise money for Yavneh. Weintraub was also the final president of the United Hebrew Congregation of Newport, Kentucky. Paul Tenkotte and James Claypoole, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Northern Kentucky* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2009), 945.

12 A *din Torah* is a hearing of a dispute in front of a traditional *beit din* (Jewish court).

13 *Hasagat gevul* (literally, infringement of boundary) is a rabbinic concept, based on an expansive interpretation of Deut. 9:14, used to refer to improper business competition.

We want to have a *Din Torah* before Orthodox rabbis from outside the city before the school starts. We are waiting for your answer accepting the *Din Torah* and appointing the name of a Rabbi of your side and we will let you know the name a Rabbi of ours before August 20.

We are still ready to accept all the students and the Rabbis should unite us.

Sincerely,

Rabbi El. Silver¹⁴

Document 2: Yavneh President Morris Weintraub Responds to Rabbi Silver¹⁵

August 19, 1959
 Rabbi El. Silver
 696 Glenwood Avenue
 Cincinnati, 25
 Ohio
 Dear Rabbi Silver:

Your letter of August 2nd summoning me to a *Din Torah*, received.

14 Rabbi Eliezer Silver (1882–1968) was founder of the Chofetz Chaim Day School in 1949 and Cincinnati's leading Orthodox rabbi from 1931 until his death. Silver was born in Lithuania and immigrated to the United States in 1907. After serving congregations in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (1907–1924), and Springfield, Massachusetts (1925–1931), he became the spiritual leader of Congregation Kneseth Israel, a position he held until his death. He also established the Vaad Ha'ir of Cincinnati in an attempt to unify Cincinnati's Orthodox community and centralize *kasbrut* supervision. Silver was a national figure, serving as president of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis and a founder of the Agudath Israel of America. During World War II he led the Vaad Hatzalah (Rescue Committee), launching a fundraising campaign that raised more than \$5 million, which was used to secure more than two thousand visas for prominent rabbis and other Eastern European refugees. "Eliezer Silver, Rabbi, 87, Dead," *New York Times* (9 February 1968): 27. See also, Aaron Rakeffet-Rothkoff, *The Silver Era: Rabbi Eliezer Silver and His Generation* (New York: Feldheim, 1982).

15 MS-851, box 4, AJA.

As I told you when I visited your home on Thursday, August 13th, to discuss the matter with you on an informal, personal basis, at which time Rabbi Cohen¹⁶ was present, it has never been, and never will be, my desire or intention to do anything in Cincinnati or in any other community which will jeopardize intensive Jewish education. My only desire at the outset—as you well know—was to save a situation and to continue with the intensive Jewish education of more than fifty children who were left “high and dry” at the time the Talmud Torah-Beth Am dropped Yavneh from its program.

It came as a distinct shock to me when you told me that you were under the impression that I founded and commenced the Yavneh Day School. Actually, Rabbi Silver, as I thought you well knew, Yavneh was founded and formed by the Talmud Torah about six or seven years ago and continued to operate under the auspices of the Talmud Torah until on or about July or August 1958, at which time a group of parents and other persons interested in the continuation of Yavneh formed an association to continue it in existence. As I told you at your home, while the summons to me is in the nature of a personal one, yet I feel a distinct moral duty and obligation to discuss it with the officers and members of the Board of Yavneh. Along with them, with the exception of one, or possibly two, are out of the City, and will not return until the early part of next week. I intend to take up the matter with them immediately, and you can rest assured that I shall contact you as soon as possible thereafter.

It is obvious, therefore, that even in the event the matter could not be straightened out without a Din Torah, it would be utterly impossible for me to name a Rabbi of my choice before August 20th, the date you mention in your letter.

With kindest personal regards, I remain
Your friend, as ever,

Morris Weintraub

16 Rabbi Hyman Jacob Cohen (1908–1976) was the director of the Chofetz Chaim Day School.

Document 3:
Proposal for a Merger of the Chofetz Chaim and Yavneh Day Schools¹⁷

n.d. (c. 1967–68)

[Merger] Proposal of Rabbis Indich¹⁸ and Goldfeder¹⁹

In the interest of Jewish education, Achduth (Unity) and the wellbeing of the entire Jewish Community, we recommend that these guidelines should be followed in order to achieve a just and fair merger of the Yavneh and Chofetz Chaim Day Schools.

Realizing that in a merger situation each school must move a little closer to a “Central” position without sacrificing any principles, we have met and discussed, searched and counselled together, and find that a Hebrew Day School, serving the needs of all who seek an intensive Jewish Religious Education, could be achieved.

We feel that, if merger is realizable at all, it should be a total merger of the CCHS system²⁰ (including both afternoon and day divisions) with

17 MS-726, box 47, folder 3, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH.

18 Rabbi David Indich (1924–1991) served as rabbi of Cincinnati’s oldest existing Orthodox congregation, Congregation Agudas Israel, popularly known as the Golf Manor Synagogue, from 1952–1988. He was ordained at the Rabbinical College of Telshe, Cleveland, Ohio.

19 Rabbi Fishel Goldfeder (1912–1981) served as rabbi of Congregation Adath Israel from 1945–1980. Goldfeder presided over the congregation’s move from Avondale to Amberley Village and its evolution from a traditional “Conservadox” synagogue with separate gender seating to a mainstream Conservative congregation with family pews. He received his ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He was supportive of both the founding of Chofetz Chaim and Yavneh.

20 The Cincinnati Community Hebrew Schools (CCHS) was the centralized Jewish supplementary school agency in Cincinnati. The CCHS was supported by the Jewish Welfare Fund (JWF) and, later, the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati, which was created by a merger of JWF and the Associated Jewish Agencies. The history of the CCHS dates back to 1887 and the creation of the Talmud Torah Society in Cincinnati. It underwent a number of iterations, adopting the name CCHS after a merger with Beth Am Nursery School (1953), Golf Manor (1957), and Ohav Shalom (1957). Yavneh Day School’s relationship with CCHS was complex, having originally operated as a Foundation School

the CHDS.²¹

1. A merged traditional Hebrew Day School using the Manhattan Hebrew Day School, Flatbush Yeshiva, Hebrew Academy of Miami, or Central Queens Yeshiva Curriculum could be acceptable to all.
2. Ivrit B'Ivrit²² should be the policy of the merged Day School.
3. The educational director of the system must be a trained educator, thoroughly conversant with all aspects of the Jewish Heritage, and fluent in modern Hebrew.
4. The director and the teachers in the system must observe Jewish tradition and shall teach Judaism in a positive manner.
5. New Hebrew teachers should be graduated of an accredited Hebrew Teachers College and licensed by either Vaad Chinuch Charedie [*sic*],²³ Torah Umesorah,²⁴ Jewish Agency,²⁵ or Jewish Education Committee,

(N-3) out of a Talmud Torah building in Cincinnati's Avondale neighborhood. Yavneh officially merged with the CCHS in 1962.

21 Chofetz Chaim merged with Yeshiva Eitz Chaim, a supplementary school, in 1963, and was officially renamed the Cincinnati Hebrew Day School (CHDS); however, the names CHDS and Chofetz Chaim continued to be used interchangeably after that date.

22 Ivrit B'Ivrit (literally, Hebrew in Hebrew) is an immersive method of Hebrew study patterned after the natural or direct method of language instruction, in which students are taught a foreign language using only the target language (rather than translation from the students' native language). Hebraist educators championed Ivrit B'Ivrit, and it was popular in many American Jewish supplementary and day schools between the 1920s and 1960s.

23 The Vaad Chinuch HaCharedi le-Yad Mizrahi was the Religious Zionist movement's education organization. It was tasked with facilitating the creation of and the advising of part-time (supplementary) and all-day schools.

24 Torah Umesorah, the National Society of Hebrew Day Schools, founded in 1944, is a loose network of Orthodox Jewish day schools under the policy-making authority of a committee of rabbinic elders affiliated with the ultra-Orthodox Agudas Harabbonim (Union of Orthodox Rabbis). Under the leadership of Dr. Joseph Kaminetsky from 1948–1980, Torah Umesorah assisted in the founding of scores of Jewish day schools outside of New York City and provided them with various services, including professional placement and curriculum development.

25 The Jewish Agency for Israel, known in Hebrew as *HaSochnut HaYehudit L'Eretz*

New York.²⁶

6. We recommend that teachers of whatever department, Hebrew or English, presently employed for five years or more should be retained in the system, provided they meet all other requisites.
7. Teachers in the English Department must be accredited and certified.
8. The English Department curriculum is to be based on the curriculum of the Cincinnati Public School system.
9. Kashrut should be observed on institutional premises.
10. Kippot—Skullcaps—are to be worn by male children on institutional premises.
11. Tefillah—prayer—shall be based on the traditional Siddur.
12. The merged system would be called the United Community Hebrew Schools (UCHS), and the Day School would be called the Yavneh-Chofetz Chaim Day School.

The Board of Directors or Board of Education, should be so comprised as to make secure that the new merged school will follow the course upon which it embarks. If these new rules are followed in good faith, we are confident that merger can take place.

Yisra'el, was founded in 1929 as the operating arm of the World Zionist Organization. Over the years it was involved in a number of programs to connect Diaspora day schools with Hebrew-speaking Israeli teachers.

26 The Jewish Education Committee of New York, originally known as the New York Bureau of Jewish Education (founded in 1910), was the central Jewish educational agency serving Greater New York. It operated a teacher certification and licensure program for Jewish educators and administrators. It is currently known as the Jewish Education Project.

Document 4:**Jacob R. Marcus²⁷ Letter Opposing the Merger of the Chofetz Chaim and Yavneh Day Schools²⁸**

n.d. (c. 1968)

It has come to my attention in recent days that there is again talk of merger between Chofetz Chaim and Yavneh Day Schools. You will not take it amiss, I know, if I allow myself the liberty of acquainting you with my views on the matter.

Tho' I have not been known in the past as a proponent of the day-school movement, I can well understand why such schools have a following, and no one can question the fact that schools like Chofetz Chaim and Yavneh have made their contribution to Cincinnati Jewish life. Certainly, they are deserving of [Jewish] Welfare Fund support, in my opinion. You will note, I hope, that I say *they*. These are two different schools and each one is distinctive in its own way. The Chofetz Chaim school is an Orthodox institution, devoted as such to the interests and advancement of Orthodox Judaism. Yavneh, on the other hand, is a community school; it is not at all unsympathetic to Orthodoxy, but it does devote itself to a wider area of Jewish concern. Any parents who seek an intensive Jewish education for his children will not be disappointed by the Yavneh school, whereas only a parent who wishes his child exposed to Orthodox Judaism will be fully comfortable at the Chofetz Chaim school.

It would, I believe, be a tragic mistake to merge these very divergent institutions into one. The only outcome of such a merger can be, Orthodox Judaism being what it is, a subordination of Yavneh's communal spirit to the Orthodox discipline represented by Chofetz Chaim.

27 Jacob Rader Marcus (1896–1995), was a historian, rabbi, and a faculty member at the Hebrew Union College, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Marcus founded the American Jewish Archives in 1947 and served as its first director. He was also the founding editor of the *American Jewish Archives Journal*.

28 MS-726, box 47, folder 3, AJA.

Proponents of a merger may argue otherwise, but that will not change the fact. I would urge you, therefore, to oppose merger if and when it is debated in the councils of the Welfare Fund. Our community has a rather enviable record of intensive Jewish education for those who wish it for themselves and their children. It has this record because parents have a choice between a school dedicated to Orthodoxy and a school of more liberal character. To deprive parents of such a choice is to render a great disservice to Cincinnati Jewish life.

Document 5:

American Association for Jewish Education²⁹ Study Panel Advises Against a Merger³⁰

Report on the Status of Jewish Education in Cincinnati

Submitted to the Study Committee of the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati by the Survey Panel of the American Association for Jewish Education, April 1968

... The survey of the Cincinnati Hebrew Day School and the Yavneh Day School demonstrates, among other things, significant differences between both schools in sponsorship, parental body, ideological preferences of lay leadership, curricular orientation, instructional emphases, language medium, preparation and outlook of Hebrew studies personnel (instructional and supervisory), academic and religious concerns re continuation beyond elementary level. There are significant differences, too, in the organization of the lay leadership and the motivations behind lay and professional interest in the school.

29 The American Association for Jewish Education was founded in 1939 to professionalize, improve, and advocate on behalf of Jewish education in the USA. Its functions included research and evaluation, as well as the promotion of communal funding for local Jewish education organizations.

30 MS-726, box 47, folder 3, AJA.

These differences in quantity and quality make it unwise at this time to suggest a merger of both schools—despite some apparent immediate financial and long-range educational advantages. One sponsorship characteristic in particular suggests a non-merger recommendation: In each of the schools there is a core of young, vibrant lay leadership strictly dedicated to the total progress and ultimate success of their respective institutions and to developing *their* school according to its own philosophy as they perceive it. These core leadership groups are equally strong in opposing “any kind of merger on any terms.” ...



Photo of restored Chestnut Street Cemetery, Cincinnati, 2021.
 (Courtesy Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati)

*“For the future protection
of the lands and of the
souls of the Jews who are
committed to our care”:
Jewish Cemeteries of Greater
Cincinnati (2008)*

KARLA GOLDMAN

This letter by attorney Edward G. Marks, dated 17 November 2008 and addressed to a California-based Internal Revenue Service agent, seeks to clarify why the newly formed consortium, Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati (JCGC), should be deemed a nonprofit for tax purposes.

Three major narratives are embedded in this document. One is the historical development of Jewish Cincinnati as reflected in the status of its cemeteries at the turn of the twenty-first century. The second inheres in the surprising ability of the community to work together across denominational and resource-level differences in an era often characterized by communal attenuation. Finally, there is the overt purpose of the letter—the need to translate Jewish nomenclature, practice, and communal obligations to an agency whose legal approach to religious entities is couched in Christian terminology and understanding. Taken together, these three narratives bring the intersecting demands of the past, present, and future of Jewish Cincinnati into compelling view.

As this special *American Jewish Archives Journal* issue attests, Cincinnati Jews have identified the 1821 creation of the Chestnut Street cemetery as the founding date for their community.¹ Since that cemetery

1 See, for instance, Jewish Cincinnati Bicentennial website, <https://www.jewish-cincy200.org/>, accessed 23 June 2022; “A Portrait of Jewish Cincinnati: A Bicentennial Celebration,” Skirball Museum, Cincinnati, 2021, in possession of Skirball Museum,

became tied to the community's first synagogue (founded in 1824), it was not long before other synagogues and groups of local Jews who did not belong to a synagogue consecrated burial plots of their own. One hundred and eighty years later, the region's twenty-five cemeteries, many created by synagogues and societies that no longer existed or were no longer thriving, were in a precarious situation. Caretakers lacked the resources to preserve and maintain them in a dignified manner. As the IRS letter notes, most of them lacked sufficient funds or a succession plan for the "aging volunteers" who presided over many of them.

The IRS letter references the trajectory of Cincinnati Jewish history in multiple ways. It notes that some of the cemeteries "were owned by synagogues, some by defunct synagogues that left a trust to pay for the care of their cemeteries, and some by independent Jewish burial societies." It cites a sixteenth-century Jewish legal text that seems to directly address Jewish Cincinnati's current predicament and the responsibility to "look after those cemeteries that may have been abandoned by those who founded them or the organization that has supported them—as where a founding synagogue has ceased to exist." The letter explains that "almost all of" the existing entities (even the better-endowed ones) "lacked sufficient funding to properly carry out their Jewish obligations individually." And finally, it illustrates the precariousness of the existing situation by noting that the last living person administering one of the sites was ill and "is not presently able to sign documents, although he has been one of the primary movers in favor of this merger."

The profusion of extant cemetery properties at the beginning of the twenty-first century reflected the historical trajectory of the city's Jewish communal landscape. Despite the continuity of some Cincinnati Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox synagogues dating back to the nineteenth century, many smaller entities emerged over time to meet the religious and/or burial needs of breakaway, non-synagogue, or immigrant groups. Many of these ended up consolidating with other entities or disappearing altogether. But while buildings could be sold or

Cincinnati; "Rededication of the Chestnut Street Cemetery," *Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati*, 26 September 2021, in possession of Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati.

torn down, the cemeteries remained, yielding a geographical patchwork across the city, with many sites lacking “either sufficient funds or sufficient people to carry on . . . proper care for those buried” within.

In many ways the 2004 incorporation of the Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati, Inc. (JCGC) and its communal role in the years since offer a fitting counterpoint to the founding of the community’s first cemetery in 1821. JCGC replaced the idea that individual organizations bore perpetual responsibility for the dead buried under their auspices with a vision of shared communal responsibility “for the future protection of the lands and of the souls of the Jews who are committed to our care.” Like the Jewish men who established the city’s first Jewish burial ground, JCGC posited a communal vision built upon shared responsibility to preserve the dignity of both the living community and those that had gone before.

Marks, the author of the IRS letter, first became aware of a looming cemetery crisis in 1996, when he joined the board of United Jewish Cemeteries (UJC, formed in 1854 when the city’s ban on burials within existing city limits forced the closure of in-town cemeteries, leading to a partnership between the Bene Israel and B’nai Yeshurun congregations). He and fellow board member Jacob Stein were surprised to find financial reports indicating that UJC, the city’s most generously endowed Jewish cemetery under the auspices of the community’s oldest and largest Reform congregations, would run short of funds in about ten years. In bringing the situation to the attention of the Rockdale and Wise Temple boards, Marks gained the buy-in of the then-congregational presidents Michael Oestreicher and Ed Herzig. After their terms ended, Oestreicher and Herzig joined with Marks in leading an outreach effort to bring in other cemetery entities facing even worse situations and to secure funding that could make a united sustainability effort viable.²

Their recruitment of twenty-four cemetery entities was complicated by concerns over whether a Reform-identified leadership group could be trusted to maintain traditional ritual observance for Conservative

2 “Rededication of the Chestnut Street Cemetery,” 9; Interview with Edward G. Marks, 21 May 2022.

and Orthodox Jews. But careful safeguards for Orthodox representation and oversight as well as the shared precarity of existing structures brought almost universal buy-in to the communal project. The IRS letter notes that the initial JCGC board, consisting of twenty-five individuals representing thirteen organizations and the interests of twenty-four cemeteries (with votes weighted by number of cemeteries and size of endowment), would transition over three years to a board where members no longer represented specific organizations, and each member would have one vote.³

Success in bringing the cemeteries together, however, would not be enough to address the looming financial disintegration that generated JCGC in the first place. As the IRS letter indicates, the annual yield of \$275,000 on the cemeteries' combined endowment funds of \$5.3 million was dwarfed by a projected operating loss of \$684,00 for 2008 alone, not to mention the money required to repair and stabilize existing cemeteries or purchase a new one.

To secure sufficient operating funds, the cemeteries and synagogues needed to win the commitment of the two organizations most specifically targeted to care for Cincinnati Jewry as a whole: the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati and the Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati. Indeed, much of the ten-plus years of work building JCGC was devoted to convincing these entities of the sincerity and transformative potential of JCGC's communal vision. The IRS letter's reference to both the Federation and the Foundation is relatively low-key—invoking them to demonstrate the Jewish communal character of the JCGC endeavor while also identifying them as among the city's "component organizations committed to raising proper funding to assure the future of our cemeteries as places of repose for the souls of our community's members."

Financial support from both the Federation and Foundation, however, was *the* key ingredient in enabling JCGC to get off the ground.

3 An initial guarantee to permanently retain one board member who would assure Orthodox standards of practice was vacated when, soon after JCGC's founding, the relevant board member professed his trust in the commitment and ability of JCGC's professional and lay leadership to sustain such practices and asked to leave the board. Marks interview.

The cooperation of the Federation was essential in establishing an immediate and future venue through which JCGC could raise money to supplement their inadequate endowment funds. At the time of the IRS conversation, Federation was cooperating with community rabbis and JCGC to raise up to \$5 million in additional endowment funds.⁴ It was, however, the Jewish Foundation's commitment of \$4 million over eight years—providing operating funds for the stabilization and repair of existing cemeteries and steps toward purchasing a new one—that made the radical transformation of the infrastructure of Cincinnati's Jewish cemeteries possible.⁵

Like JCGC itself, the Jewish Foundation's ability to enable this effort speaks to the impact of Jewish Cincinnati's storied history on its early twentieth-first-century prospects and possibilities. It is notable that the Foundation's assets (\$70 million at the time of its founding) came from the 1995 sale of the nation's first Jewish Hospital, founded in 1850. The Foundation's willingness to invest a good amount of its relatively recently established funds in an untried communal experiment was consistent with its early actions in shoring up other legacy institutions, as well as fostering new ones.⁶

4 Given the fall 2008 financial crisis, not all of the targeted financial benchmarks were met within initial timeframes. Results of that Federation campaign yielded \$1.8 million in additional endowment funds for JCGC. The 2022 endowment stands at about \$16 million, with an additional \$5 million endowment campaign underway. Interview with David Harris, executive director, Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati, 14 April 2022.

5 JCGC, the Federation, and the Foundation agreed to the specifics of this agreement in "Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati, Memorandum of Understanding," February 2008, in possession of JCGC.

6 For instance, the Foundation had been an influential funder of the initiative to reestablish the Jewish Community Center, which had closed in the Roselawn neighborhood—no longer a center of Jewish life—in 2002. The Foundation purchased land for the new JCC on the campus of Rockdale Temple in Amberley, thus both shoring up the temple, which was facing its own financial crisis, and reestablishing the JCC, which opened there in 2008. The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati's website reports current assets of \$500 million and annual disbursements in the Cincinnati Jewish community of \$18 million "to strengthen Jewish identity, Jewish education and engagement, and to ensure that the basic needs of vulnerable community members are met." Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati website, <https://thejewishfoundation.org/about/> (accessed 21 May 2022). It

After more than ten years spent winning Cincinnati Jewish organizations over to a new vision of their shared destiny, JCGC was left with one more structural task: to secure IRS endorsement as a 501(c)3 nonprofit.⁷ In this, Marks had to translate this Jewish communal endeavor into terms that were legible to the IRS—that is, he had to show how Jewish institutions and rituals could be matched with Christian-centered legal definitions of religious practice, leadership, and community. For instance, Marks needed to show the IRS agent that names such as “Beth Israel,” or “Love Brothers” were not individuals or actual brothers but were transliterations or translations of Hebrew- and Yiddish-named synagogues or societies. He points out, for instance, that “Hirsh Hoffert is not the name of a person, but the name of the Jewish nonprofit organization that has owned one of the cemeteries for more than a century.”

To show that JCGC conformed to IRS understandings of a religious nonprofit, Marks states that “we believe that JCGC is a church by the definition of its corporate purpose clause.... It is exclusively a *Jewish* organization, and the entire reason for its existence is to perpetuate Judaism.” He goes on to cite Jewish sources regarding burial rites, while also identifying the texts from which these passages are drawn. For instance, he instructs that the Torah is “the first five books of what the Christian world knows as the Old Testament.” “Judaism,” he explains, “is more than a way of worshiping God; it is a way of life” that “requires us to deal with our dead in very particular ways *as a part of our religion*. [emphasis in original]” In explicating the communal obligation that underlay the founding of JCGC, he conveys essentially the same vision of Jewish community used to win the support of the cemeteries, the Federation, and the Foundation: He draws upon classic Jewish texts to demonstrate that “it is mandated that the *Jewish community* [emphasis in original]” care for cemeteries no longer overseen by their founders.

In appreciating JCGC’s accomplishment, it is notable that the

is also notable that the Jewish Foundation is the only foundation created from the sale of an American Jewish hospital with a mandate to serve *only* Jewish community.

7 Marks explains that if JCGC was designated as a cemetery under the tax code, this would subject it to an array of Ohio laws that would undermine its ability to bring these cemeteries together to combine their endowments and act collectively. Marks interview.

weakening of community—reflected in orphaned properties and the inability of active cemeteries to meet current and future needs—did not end in the abandonment or dissolution of these historic properties. Likewise, it is important to recognize that this outcome was possible because of the ability and willingness of the Federation and, especially, of the Foundation to buy into JCGC's vision of collective responsibility.

JCGC in 2022 can point to its success not just in securing its status as a Jewish communal institution *and* a nonprofit, but in the repair and maintenance of its old cemeteries and the purchase of a new property. Moreover, it has done so with a commitment to respecting all varieties of Jewish religious observance. Beyond its role in guaranteeing continued Jewish burial practices, JCGC has also played a role in bringing renewed pride and energy to the community, especially in encouraging and overseeing the community's robust bicentennial celebration in 2021–2022—including public gatherings, lectures, exhibits, extensive media coverage, refurbishing of the 1821 Chestnut St. cemetery into a welcoming pocket park in Cincinnati's West End, and this copy of the *American Jewish Archives Journal*. Such achievements have confirmed its ability to spark communal possibility among the living, alongside its care for the dead.

Despite current communal disappointments such as the now-confirmed shuttering of the rabbinical program on Cincinnati's Hebrew Union College campus, announced in April 2022, the promise of shared community reflected in Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati may provide an animating vision for a historic community moving toward a reimagined future.⁸

Karla Goldman is Sol Drachler Professor of Judaic Studies and Professor of Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan, where she directs the Jewish Communal Leadership Program.

8 The announcement that the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion would shutter its rabbinical program in the city where that program was founded can be taken as a current marker of the historical decline of Jewish Cincinnati's national significance. "Hebrew Union College to End Cincinnati Rabbinical Program after Board Backs Controversial Plan," Jewish Telegraphic Agency (11 April 2022).

[excerpted]

Letter to
Internal Revenue Service [agent]
Exempt Organizations
4300 Watt Avenue
Sacramento, CA

November 18, 2008

Thank you for the opportunity to assemble a response and documents to properly reflect our position that Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati, Inc. (“JCGC”) is a charity that qualifies under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code....

Preliminarily, we want to clarify that all of the merging cemeteries and organizations were non-profits. Some were owned by synagogues, some by defunct synagogues that left a trust to pay for the care of their cemeteries, and some by independent Jewish burial societies. Their names often are transliterations from Hebrew or Yiddish (which use a different alphabet), and although names or words sounding like names may be used, *none of these lands came from individuals*. The term “Beth,” (sometimes “Bet”) for example, means “house”—as in “Beth Israel,” or “House of Israel.” “Hirsh Hoffert” is not the name of a person, but the name of the Jewish nonprofit organization that has owned one of the cemeteries for more than a century. Similarly “Love Brothers” is the former name of synagogue Ohav Shalom.

By this merger, JCGC is assuming responsibility not only for current obligations and deferred maintenance, but for the future protection of the lands and of the souls of the Jews who are committed to our care....

Responding specifically to your questions, we believe that JCGC is a church by the definition of its corporate purpose clause. Although its primary purpose centers around cemetery operations, it is exclusively a *Jewish* organization, and the entire reason for its existence is to perpetuate Judaism.

The cemetery as a Jewish place of reverence and an integral part of our

religion is based on the Torah—the first five books of what the Christian world knows as the Old Testament. Judaism is more than a way of worshiping God; it is a way of life.... Judaism places obligations on its followers in many aspects of their lives, and in many of the functions of everyday existence.

Judaism also requires us to deal with our dead in very particular ways *as a part of our religion*.

The obligation to create Jewish cemeteries goes at least as far back as Abraham, who purchased a burial site for his wife, Sarah (Genesis 23).... In the *Shulkhan Arukh*, we are commanded to assure great respect for our cemeteries as places of reverence (Yoreh Deah, 368), and it is mandated that the *Jewish community* look after those cemeteries that may have been abandoned by those who founded them or the organization that has supported them—as where a founding synagogue has ceased to exist....

Prayer services are conducted regularly at our cemeteries, not only at the time of burial, but also at the time of certain visits during the year, at the time of dedication of the stone marking the place of burial, and on certain Jewish holidays.... [B]y its very nature, death does not follow a predictable schedule. The lack of this schedule does not rebut the mandate of our religion and our practices that we must conduct prayers at our cemeteries as an integral part of their operation....

Although it is true that JCGC operates cemeteries, it is more than just a cemetery organization. It is a *Jewish* organization, and the precepts of Judaism pervade its activities.... The Jewish Federation of Cincinnati is a primary partner ... in providing organizational support; each of the Jewish congregations in Greater Cincinnati is a participant in the ritual decisions relating to JCGC....

We also believe that Rev. Rul. 79-359 clearly qualifies JCGC as a 501(c)(3) organization.... **JCGC is an organization that otherwise qualifies, and that provides traditional burial services that directly support and maintain basic tenets and beliefs of Judaism regarding burial of its followers....**

JCGC is a *non-profit* organization that is bringing together 23 *non-profit* organizations into a single *non-profit*. The ‘purchase price’ is the exchange by the old organizations of all their assets for an assumption by JCGC of all their obligations—including the Jewish obligation to care for these lands for all eternity in accordance with the traditions of Judaism....

[T]he final composition of JCGC is 23 cemeteries contributed by 13 organizations....

As a result of illness, the only person still living with regard to #1 (Chesed Chel Emes) [one of the properties] is not presently able to sign documents, although he has been one of the primary movers in favor of this merger....

One of the principal reasons for bringing the cemeteries together was that almost all of them lacked sufficient funding to properly carry out their Jewish obligations individually, and the broader Jewish community realized that it must step in to care for those that no longer had either sufficient funds or sufficient people to carry on the proper care for those buried in their cemeteries. The Jewish community and many of its component organizations committed to raising proper funding to assure the future of our cemeteries as places of repose for the souls of our community’s members, and to fulfill our religious obligations.

The Jewish Foundation is a private philanthropy that has been in existence since 1995. It is dedicated to promoting and strengthening the Jewish community of Greater Cincinnati, and to supporting medical initiatives at the Jewish Hospital....

The Jewish Federation of Cincinnati is the largest Jewish non-profit fundraising organization in Cincinnati, supporting the programs and services of over 32 partner agencies that care for thousands of people....

The formation of JCGC is a product of a collaborative process including lay leaders, rabbis, the Jewish Federation and the Jewish Foundation, that worked for over 10 years to arrive at a solution to address many concerns of the respective cemeteries, the most serious of which were (a) needed cemetery repairs, (b) escalating operating costs, (c) no succession for aging volunteers running some of the cemetery organizations, and

(d) the need for new cemetery land. This working group retained two cemetery consultants and worked with several rabbis from all of the primary divisions of Jewish liturgy to help them develop the appropriate solution. The consultants recommended that all of the community's cemeteries should be consolidated into a single new organization responsible for operating and maintaining the entire Jewish community's existing cemeteries and planning for the community's future needs....

Based on the projections that were developed by the consultants and the working group, JCGC will be able to cover its needs for at least the next 25–35 years with the current funding plan, but to be assured of having a large enough endowment to last in perpetuity (which a Jewish cemetery is obligated to do), JCGC would need about \$3 million in additional present value dollars.... The \$5,335,000 of investments is the total contributed by all organizations merging into JCGC.... JCGC's projected operating loss for 2008 is \$684,000. The projections assume a 5% investment return on \$5.5 million ... of endowment, yielding only \$275,000 of income to offset the \$684,000 operating loss. Without the additional funding, it is clear that JCGC's endowment would run down pretty quickly....

We are currently looking for property for a new cemetery but have not yet identified a suitable site. It is anticipated that a new cemetery would have separate sections for the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform denominations of Judaism, with each having different ritual rules and regulations....⁹

The JCGC Board consists of 25 individuals from ... 13 organizations, representing a total of 39 votes. The number of votes was allocated according to a formula based on the number of cemeteries and the size of endowment contributed to JCGC.... The Board will transition to a *community Board* over three years, at which point the *member organizations* will no longer have voting rights and each Board member will have one vote.

9 JCGC dedicated a new cemetery in Loveland, Ohio in 2017, "JCGC's new community cemetery adds to Cincinnati's Jewish cemetery history," *American Israelite*, 23 March 2017.

In the broader sense, as a result of the merger, JCGC will serve the entire Jewish community in Greater Cincinnati without reference to individual Jews' synagogue affiliation.... Its constituency can generally be described as the approximately 25,000 Jewish members of the Greater Cincinnati community.

I hope this letter adequately responds to your letter.... If I can provide you with anything further or answer any questions, please feel free to call on me.

Thank you for your assistance in helping us to further explain our organization to you.

Very truly yours,
Edward G. Marks
Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati

Book Reviews

Sarah Bunin Benor, Jonathan Krasner, Sharon Avni, *Hebrew Infusion: Language and Community at American Jewish Summer Camps* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2020), 318 pp.

Hebrew Infusion: Language and Community at American Jewish Summer Camps, winner of the 2020 National Jewish Book Award in Education and Jewish Identity, is a great read. Sarah Bunin Benor, Jonathan Krasner, and Sharon Avni have created an insightful and timely work that underscores Hebrew as the key to unlock the treasury of Jewish literature—from classic Jewish texts to modern Hebrew literature—and as a tool to build connection, both at camp and with the Jewish people.

Identity and language is a hot topic. A recent issue of *The New York Times* contained three vivid examples of the intersection of language and identity: outrage over the dearth of French language books in a Montreal bookstore; a Boston mayoral hopeful using her local accent to sway voters from casting their ballots for a relative newcomer who does not speak “Bostonese”; and a letter to the editor regarding the controversy over they/them/their pronouns. The author of that letter, John H. McWhorter, a well-regarded linguist at Columbia, gave his *gushpanka* (seal of approval) for this volume. Having a team of authors whose expertise includes Jewish languages and sociolinguistics (Benor), the history of Jewish education and American Jewry (Krasner), and applied linguistics and socialization (Avni) makes this work appealing to an audience far beyond those in Jewish educational research, including scholars and practitioners of heritage language learning and endangered languages.

There is a large research literature about Jewish camping as a vehicle of Jewish socialization. American Jews whose European parents and grandparents fled the confinement of the ghetto often replaced it with a self-imposed ghetto of Jewish ignorance. Jewish camping was a part of the campaign to educate the assimilated Jew. In *How Goodly Are Thy*

Tents: Summer Camps as Jewish Socializing Experiences, Amy L. Sales and Leonard Saxe explore a range of camps that feature Jewish practice and ritual, such as Shabbat prayer, holiday observance (who knew about Tishah B'Av?), and in some, Hebrew language and Jewish education. Jewish camps introduced campers to counselors who became role models; campers forged intense friendships that demanded their return summer after summer—which inspired them to send their children and grandchildren. (My nephew notes that three generations of his family have spent forty-three summers at Moshava Habonim D'ror.)

Unlike the abundant literature on Jewish socialization in camps, *Hebrew Infusion* affords a singular examination of Hebrew at camp, acknowledging the influence of Benedict Anderson in the primacy of language in building “imagined communities.” The authors follow the path of the Hebrew-rich immersion camps as they became Hebrew-infused camps. The *Ivrit shel Shabbat* (Sabbath Hebrew) of the Mordecai Kaplan-inspired Talmud Torahs was replaced by CHE, the authors' term for Camp Hebraized English, a sprinkling of nouns essential to camp life but not able to flourish or nourish life outside the hothouse of camp.

The Hebrew-immersion camps were the natural successor of the efforts of the Hebraist poets, feuilletonists, and journalists that Alan Mintz z"l described in *A Sanctuary in the Wilderness*. Camp founders such as Shlomo Schulsinger, Moshe Davis, Sylvia Ettenberg, and others carried on the failed mission of the literati of an earlier decade; only the Noar Ivri, the outreach to youth, could help revive the campaign for Hebrew. A Hebrew-speaking, -reading, and -writing elite in the United States could occupy real space rather than exist only in the minds of the writers. Instead of an *Olam Ivri l'ma'lah*, (the heavenly Hebrew world) the camps could become an *Olam Ivri l'matah* (the earthly Hebrew world.) These camps would enact Kaplan's Judaism as a civilization through language, art, and music.

Hebrew immersion camps were designed for city kids who went to Talmud Torahs or ten-hour-a-week Hebrew schools. In these schools, certain classes were designed as feeders for Jewish higher learning in Hebrew Teachers Colleges in the city. I attended one of them when Dr. Louis Hurwich was the head of Boston's Bureau of Jewish Education, the president of the Hebrew Teachers College, and the founder of Camp

Yavneh. The classes at camp in textual and modern Hebrew fulfilled credits in the and the College and its teen program, Prozdor. Arnold Band, one of my teachers, reflects on his years as a student and camper in a recent Hebrew Teachers College publication. Arnie's best friends were his public school and subway buddies: Ackie (Walter Ackerman, director of Yavneh; founding father of the study of American Jewish education and head of education at Ben Gurion University), Doch (David Weinstein, president of Spertus College, who pioneered a "Hebrew through Pictures" program with linguist I.A. Richards), and Ickie, (better known as Yitzhak Twersky, Littauer Chair in Jewish studies, Harvard.) All of them were campers, then counselors, and eventually junior faculty at the Hebrew Teachers College.

The Talmud Torahs crumbled as American Jews moved to the suburbs, and there are many reasons why the original immersion camps became Hebrew infusion camps: growing secularization that weakened attachments to Jewish practice; changing attitudes toward Zionism and Israel; the lack of qualified personnel; and the competition of sports, music, and drama camps as "worthy uses of summer" are just a few. To use a phrase of the hour, the supply chain broke down. The rationale for Hebrew was unclear, the stream of homegrown fluent Hebrew speakers dried up as college tuitions grew astronomically, and imported Israelis presented their own challenges. CHE became the order of the day.

The chapters on linguistics in *Hebrew Infusion* offer a reminder that all living languages evolve. We cannot wring our hands over the demise of the Hebrew immersion camp when recent Israeli entries to Eurovision's music competition are all in English. Hebrew is still a secret language that lives in camp and evokes warm memories. It is still an identity marker for campers, inspiring a number to take Jewish studies courses in college. True, there are aspects of CHE that make me grit my teeth, such as "clipping" (e.g., *chadar* for *chadar ochel*.) But then again, when I referred to my sweater as a *tzimriyah* and ordered *krichim* in Jerusalem, I made Israelis laugh, if not grit their teeth.

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Jessica L. Carr, *The Hebrew Orient: Palestine in Jewish Visual Culture, 1901–1938* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2020), 299 pp.

In her book's introduction, Jessica L. Carr shares the linguistic roots of the term "photograph." It's "writing with light," she explains. This definition also fits what Carr herself accomplishes with *The Hebrew Orient: Palestine in Jewish Visual Culture, 1901–1938*. Despite an occasional lack of focus, her writing nonetheless illuminates the ways that visual culture can expand our understanding of how American Jews viewed Palestine and themselves in the early twentieth century.

Carr's book presents and analyzes images of Palestine produced by five American Jewish organizations: the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (NFTS), The Jewish Encyclopedia (JE), the Synagogue Council of America (SCA), and Hadassah. Each case study offers (1) background on the organization; (2) images of Palestine that the organization used in communications to their constituents; and (3) Carr's analysis of these images as vehicles for the creation and maintenance of a usable American Jewish past, present, and future. Carr argues that we looked to "the Orient" to define ourselves. To this end, she reads her images as documents of identity: "For Jewish Americans, looking toward 'the Orient' was explorative and aspirational: through this visual culture, they imagined themselves by imagining others" (5). The result is an ambitious exploration of Orientalism, heritage, gender, and Jewish visual culture.

This book raises the bar for academic works about Jewish material culture. It is thoughtful and thorough in layout, method, and analysis. For example, embedding high-quality images of the visual culture in the text allows for deeper engagement with the material. While it might seem painfully obvious that images of the visual culture should be included as part of the discussion of visual culture, too often images either are not included at all or are grouped together at the center of the book. Treating visual culture as "illustration" in this way robs it of its primacy of place in the argument as well as its power as text. Carr's examples of visual culture take their rightful place as text throughout the book.

In addition, Carr offers an elegant introduction to the methodology

of visual culture, making this book more accessible to readers unfamiliar with the field. Too often, academics write from the limited perspective of their own niche discipline, demanding insider knowledge from their readers. Carr starts with the big picture, offering a compelling discussion of space and time and the ways that technology, such as photography and travel, collapsed our experience of these phenomena. “Visual culture in particular brought speed to the masses. The politization of speed resulted from institutional attempts to control and regulate the democratization of speed. Even for those who could not travel, they could see what was afar. I use visual culture as a methodology in this book because it offers a window into the public culture that Jewish organizations formed in the early 20th century and because it provides a glimpse into what everyday people saw when Palestine-turned ‘the Orient’ was presented to them” (7). In this way, she walks the reader through the hows and whys of visual culture as powerful primary source material.

After completing her primer on method and visual culture, Carr’s readers are prepped for her curated collection of early-twentieth-century American Jewish organizations’ images of Palestine. Each chapter begins with a visual text that sets the stage for the themes in that section. The 1928 cover of the ZOA magazine, *The New Palestine*, for example, launches Chapter 2. Here, the Statue of Liberty shines her lamp on Jerusalem, connecting old and new, “the Orient” and the West, Jewish heritage and a Jewish future: “Both time and space collapse in this image. The visual text telescopes the gap between New York Harbor and the city of Jerusalem” (43). At the beginning of Chapter 6, a Hadassah pamphlet prompts the reader “To Join the Circle of Palestine’s Children.” Carr uses this invitation to uncover how the organization was both maternalistic and feminist, asserting a special role for Jewish women as caretakers in Palestine, a role that relied on traditional, gendered views of women as mothers and, at the same, created new, more powerful roles for women in American Jewish public life. Reading these images allows for a more complex, nuanced understanding of American Jewish views of early-twentieth-century Palestine.

As the book moves forward, however, it falters. Carr mines each successive image for its connections to Jewish heritage, religious history, American history, gender, psychology, class, and an “imagined Orient.”

When coupled with five different organizations and their histories, the result is a sprawling narrative that would benefit from tighter focus. It doesn't help that Carr centers her work on two slippery concepts: Orientalism and heritage. The repeated use of these ill-defined terms compromises the clarity of the writing: "My definition of Orientalism refers to the construction of heritage, especially through visual culture, and the continuous revision of communal identities. The process of constructing 'heritage' is ongoing, disputed, and creative" (9). The process of trying to understand sentences like this is ongoing, distracting, and confusing. This book aims to show scholars the significance of viewing visual culture and Jewish studies together. Carr succeeds in presenting the potential of visual culture, but instead of grounding it in a clear and solid understanding of Jewish studies, she follows too many other, vaguely defined pathways for interpretation. In the end, this creates visual and verbal clutter where there should be clean lines of argumentation and analysis.

Like the photography that she describes in her introduction, Carr uses visual texts to provide a view of Palestine through the lens of American Jewish organizational culture. The result is less a panorama of Palestine and more a view of how American Jewish concepts of Orientalism, gender, and heritage framed our understanding of Palestine. Ultimately, Carr turns the camera around in this book. She takes an early-twentieth-century selfie, which would benefit from additional editing, but still succeeds in showing how visual culture portraying Palestine can give us a more complete picture of ourselves.

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Gabrielle Glaser, *American Baby: A Mother, a Child, and the Shadow History of Adoption* (New York: Viking, 2021), 352 pp.

The story Gabrielle Glaser tells in *American Baby: A Mother, a Child, and the Shadow History of Adoption* is heart-wrenching. In 1961, sixteen-year-old Margaret Erle became pregnant after having sex for the first time. Even before her son was born, social workers and her parents began to pressure her to relinquish the baby for adoption. Although she and her boyfriend George Katz desperately wanted to get married and keep the baby, Margaret finally caved when a social worker threatened to put her in juvenile hall. Although Margaret and George married and had three other children, they never forgot their first-born son, Stephen.

At ten months old, Stephen Erle became David Rosenberg when he was adopted by Ephraim and Esther Rosenberg. Despite his loving family, David had questions about his origins but, like many adoptees, largely kept them to himself for fear of hurting his parents. In 2013, years after his parents' deaths, a DNA test connected David to a distant biological cousin, who offered to search for his birth mother. The ensuing reunion of mother and son poignantly occurred only weeks before David's death from cancer. (Sadly, George Katz had passed away years earlier.)

Glaser, a journalist who has covered adoption, surrogacy, and reproductive technologies, skillfully weaves Margaret and David's experiences together with the broader history of adoption. Their "story wasn't an aberration," she writes. "It was representative of a much larger reproductive- and human-rights story that encompassed generations of American women and their sons and daughters, many of whom were exploited for profit and for science. It was an important chapter of American social and cultural history hiding in plain sight, undergirded by a soothing narrative that had repackaged the reality of what it meant to adopt, what it meant to be adopted, and what it meant to surrender a baby you gave birth to" (6).

The postwar decades were rife with contradictory messages for girls about sex. Sex education was virtually nonexistent, birth control was unavailable to unmarried women, and cultural messages blamed girls if they didn't discourage boys' sexual advances. "The rules were utterly perplexing," Glaser writes. "You were sold glamorous formfitting dresses

for proms and Sweet Sixteen parties. Yet you were supposed to be a virgin as you recited your vows, then magically morph into a sex kitten on your wedding night” (42). Despite the taboos, sexual experimentation was common. Between 1940 and 1966, the number of babies born to unwed mothers more than tripled.

Shamed by an out-of-wedlock pregnancy, many parents sent their daughters to maternity homes for the duration of their pregnancies. The broad story of these millions of “girls in trouble” has been told before, most notably in Ann Fessler’s *The Girls Who Went Away: The Hidden History of Women Who Surrendered Children for Adoption in the Decades Before Roe v. Wade* (2006). Margaret Erle was in one sense lucky; Lakeview, the maternity home to which her parents sent her, was a “bucolic prison,” less oppressive than many. But she was caught in the same coercive system.

Faced with the era’s intense pressure to have children, married couples (mostly white and middle class) who struggled with infertility turned increasingly to adoption. To ensure enough “supply” to meet the “demand” for “blue-ribbon babies,” adoption agencies and maternity homes of this “Baby Scoop Era” pressured vulnerable women to relinquish their babies. “Nobody’s going to want you when they know about this,” Margaret was told. “You’ll have a new life, the baby will have a new life. Just sign these papers—and this whole thing will be like it never happened” (77).

The tale only grows more harrowing. Adoption workers aimed to “match” babies with prospective adoptive parents so that they would resemble biological families, in intelligence and character as well as appearance. Matching depended on studies that today would be considered highly unethical. Viewers of the 2018 documentary *Three Identical Strangers* will be familiar with the study in which twins and triplets were deliberately separated in order to explore the relative influence of nature and nurture. Equally horrifying was an experiment by pediatrician Samuel Karelitz. Theorizing that the smartest babies were those who cried most from pain, Karelitz used a special gun to shoot rubber bands at the feet of newborns to inflict pain and induce crying. Because no parent would agree to such an experiment, it was conducted on infants waiting for adoption.

Margaret and David's story illuminates many of the lifelong challenges birth parents and adoptees faced, especially in the corrosive culture of secrecy and shame of this period. Birth mothers were counseled to "forget this ever happened"; some adoptees were never even told they had been adopted. Birth certificates were amended to list adoptive parents' names and the original records were sealed, making it almost impossible for birth parents and children to reconnect. In reality, few women who place a child for adoption simply "move on," and most adoptees have a natural interest in their biological roots and heritages.

Compelling as Glaser's narrative is, why review *American Baby* in a Jewish studies journal? Because the story of David and both his birth and adoptive parents is, from beginning to end, a Jewish one.

The specter of the Holocaust hovers over much of this book. Margaret was born to lower-middle-class refugees from Nazi Germany who worried that a pregnant teenage daughter would jeopardize their tenuous social status. George's parents, who saw Margaret as beneath them, were upper-middle-class Viennese Holocaust survivors. Ephraim and Esther Rosenberg were Holocaust survivors from Romania; David followed in Ephraim's footsteps and became a cantor.

When she became pregnant, Margaret entered a Jewish adoption pipeline. Lakeview was owned by the Louise Wise Adoption Agency, founded in 1916 by the wife of prominent Reform rabbi Stephen Wise. Originally focused on finding Jewish homes for abandoned or orphaned Jewish immigrant children, after World War II the agency increasingly matched Jewish couples with the babies of unmarried Jewish mothers. In doing so, it often lied to both birth mothers and prospective adoptive parents.

Perhaps most troubling is the role of the Louise Wise Agency and Jewish scientists in the disturbing studies on babies to be placed for adoption. Viola Bernard, who, with Peter Neubauer, designed the twin and triplet study, was the principal psychiatrist for the Louise Wise agency in the 1930s and a board member for fifty years; Catholic Charities refused to take part in her study, but Louise Wise agreed. Samuel Karelitz also served on Louise Wise's board. Anthropologist Harry Shapiro consulted for Louise Wise to determine babies' racial

backgrounds; his methods, including examinations of skulls, nail beds, and Mongolian spots, were eerily similar to Nazi methods of identifying Jews. Post-Holocaust, Glaser observes, “One might have expected Louise Wise Services—as well as Bernard and Neubauer, who were both Jewish [as were Karelitz and Shapiro]—to be particularly sensitive to such matters. In fact, the opposite occurred” (107).

American Baby is based on a prodigious amount of research. Glaser conducted hundreds of interviews with Margaret’s and David’s family and friends, birth mothers, adoptee-rights activists, adoptive parents, and social workers. She also did extensive archival research into the history of adoption in the United States and explored Viola Bernard’s archive.

One important part of the story of American adoption remains largely absent: the role of race. While Glaser is correct that “[T]he experiences of black women with unplanned pregnancies unfolded in an entirely separate realm, typical of our segregated nation,” some additional attention to how and why these realms diverged, and what happened to babies born to white Jewish mothers and Black fathers, would have made an already compelling book even stronger (289).

American Baby exposes a shameful era in American history, in which disreputable methods fed an “adoption-industrial complex.” Thankfully, over the past decades, an increasingly vocal adoptee-rights movement has pushed for greater openness in adoption and reform of the practice of adoption. Glaser also reveals painful elements in American Jewish history. The entire Wise family has been widely admired, but the agency that bore its name became involved in morally reprehensible practices. Judaism prides itself on placing a high value on family, but American Jewry colluded in a system that destroyed some families in order to build others. The Jewish community must confront this past and strive to do better by all members of the adoption triad.

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Roland B. Gittelsohn, *Pacifist to Padre: The World War II Memoir of Chaplain Roland B. Gittelsohn, December 1941–January 1946* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2021), liii + 317 pp.

Roland B. Gittelsohn was the first Jewish chaplain in Marine Corps history, the author of the most famous eulogy delivered by any American military chaplain during World War II, and a hallowed figure in Marine Corps lore. The memoir he wrote during and shortly after his time in the military lay buried in the files of the American Jewish Archives for seventy-five years, but it was unearthed some ten years ago to become what is now our most important source for information on Gittelsohn's career as a chaplain and on the events leading up to his famous eulogy.

Gittelsohn wrote the eulogy while serving in the Fifth Marine Division on Iwo Jima and delivered it at the dedication of the section of his division's military cemetery reserved for Jewish Marines. The original plan was for him to deliver a eulogy at the memorial service at the dedication of the cemetery itself, but eight Protestant and Catholic chaplains successfully protested that this would be unseemly. Christians, they argued, should be eulogized only by Christian clergy, and over 95 percent of those to be interred in the cemetery were presumably Christians.

Instead of a general memorial service, it was decided that there should be separate services for Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Jews. "I do not remember anything in my life that has made me so painfully heartsick," Gittelsohn later wrote. "Protestants, Catholics, and Jews had lived together, fought together, died together, and now lay buried together. But we the living could not unite to pray together." This was an especially bitter experience for Gittelsohn, since he planned to present his deeply felt explanation of what the war was all about to Marines, whom he believed were generally unaware of the ideological dimension of the conflict.¹

1 The battle for the island of Iwo Jima commenced on 19 February 1945 and lasted for five weeks. It was the bloodiest battle in Marine Corps history and the only one in the Pacific war in which American casualties exceeded those of the Japanese. Of the 71,000 Marines participating in the battle, 26,000 were either killed or wounded. Iwo Jima, Gittelsohn wrote, "was the most unspeakably horrendous hell I have ever known or could imagine." One would think that Auschwitz would have been even more horrendous to imagine, particularly for a rabbi.

Titled “The Purest Democracy” and modeled on Lincoln’s Gettysburg address, the eulogy paid tribute to the Marines who had perished on the island, vowed their sacrifices would not be in vain, and predicted a new birth of freedom would emerge in which “Protestants, Catholics, and Jews ... white men and negroes alike” would “enjoy the democracy for which all of them have here paid the price.” In this cemetery, Gittelsohn said, “no man prefers another because of his faith or despises him because of his color. Here there are no quotas of how many from each group are admitted or allowed. ... Theirs is the highest and purest democracy.”²

Three Protestant chaplains believed that Gittelsohn should have been allowed to deliver his eulogy at the general memorial service and boycotted their own service to attend the Jewish one. One of the chaplains mimeographed several thousand copies of the eulogy and circulated it throughout the troops on Iwo Jima. Marines informed relatives and friends back in the United States of the eulogy, and the media soon learned of it. *Time* magazine published excerpts, Robert St. John read it on his radio program, it was inserted into the *Congressional Record*, and it was broadcast worldwide over the Army’s shortwave radio network. The eulogy was viewed as an eloquent enunciation of their country’s war aims, and the Christian chaplains who had blocked Gittelsohn from delivering it at the larger dedication were described as un-American bigots. Gittelsohn thought it was the attempt to prevent him from speaking at the general memorial service and not the eulogy itself that was largely responsible for his fifteen minutes of fame.

No one during the 1930s would have predicted that Gittelsohn would join any American military effort, much less become the most important American Jewish chaplain of World War II. He had absorbed the pervasive antimilitary atmosphere of the 1930s that was particularly present at Hebrew Union College, where he received rabbinical ordination in 1936. During the 1930s he zealously read antiwar literature, joined the War Resisters League, took the Oxford Pledge stating that he would refuse to participate in any future war, opposed the military

2 Gittelsohn would read the eulogy in 1995 at the Marine Corps monument in northern Virginia, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the battle.

draft and the presence of ROTC programs on college campuses, and put his faith in the League of Nations, international law, and disarmament agreements. He also supported the neutrality legislation of the 1930s that sought to quarantine the United States from Europe's problems, even if they restricted trade with Great Britain and other opponents of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. For Gittelsohn, war—not an Axis victory in the European conflict—was the ultimate evil. “I hate Hitler and want desperately to see him defeated,” he said at the time, but “I want us to stay out of the war even if he seems to be winning.” Gittelsohn would later admit that these sentiments were foolish.

And yet Gittelsohn, who had opposed every naval appropriation bill in Congress prior to December 1941, gave up his pulpit at Central Synagogue in Rockville Center, Long Island, and enlisted in the Navy on 12 May 1943, serving until 27 January 1946. He was thirty-three years old, married, and a father when he joined the Navy. The Pearl Harbor attack had caused him to rethink his categorical pacifism and accept the classic distinction between just and unjust wars. Judaism, he emphasized at the time, distinguishes between a *milchemet chovah*, a compulsory war, and a *milchemet r'shut*, an optional war. World War II was, in his opinion, a *milchemet chovah*, and every American Jew was obliged to aid the war effort, particularly since Hitler was a modern Amalekite. Gittelsohn was also motivated by the dissonance of urging the members of his synagogue to join the military if he himself did not join it, and by the duty he felt to minister to Jews serving in the military.

This transformation from pacifist to military chaplain has been the primary focus of those who have studied Gittelsohn's career. He himself asked, “What made me, after the most excruciating moral dilemma of my life, renounce my pacifism and apply for a military commission?” and others have posed the same question. Thus, Lee Mandel titled his 2015 biography of Gittelsohn *Unlikely Warrior: A Pacifist Rabbi's Journey from the Pulpit to Iwo Jima*.

Gittelsohn's untitled, typewritten, 165-page document was resurrected a decade ago by Ronit Y. Stahl, a professor of history at the University of California, who encountered the memoir while researching her doctoral dissertation on the modern American military chaplaincy. Stahl drew the attention of Donald M. Bishop, a professor at the Marine Corps

University, to the manuscript. It was published last year with the suggestive title *Pacifist to Padre*³; the book was edited by Bishop and contains a brief preface by Stahl. We are in debt to both for its publication, which enables us to have first-hand information on Gittelsohn's metamorphosis.

The book clearly and movingly describes the reasons why Gittelsohn enlisted; the training he underwent at the Navy's chaplaincy school; his opposition to racism and antisemitism within the Marine Corps generally and the chaplaincy in particular; his relationships with the servicemen, Jew and gentile alike, who sought him out for various reasons; the fear and sorrow he experienced under fire; his responses to the concerns of Orthodox Marines who had never before eaten nonkosher meat; and his attempts to provide to the troops "spiritual rations" prior to going into battle. Much of his time was devoted to writing letters to the parents of Marines, to women back in the states assuring them of the faithfulness of their husbands and boyfriends, and, tragically, to Marine families informing them of the deaths in battle of their sons and husbands. As a chaplain, he noted, he was "suspended somewhere between the dual worlds of the military and the civilian," tasked with interpreting "each to the other, thereby strengthening morale at home on which morale at the front so largely depends."

As part of the American military, Gittelsohn wrote, he was a member of "the most honorable fraternity on earth, the fraternity of those who have suffered and sacrificed so that humanity would move forward instead of backward." Never again would he be called upon to be the part educator, psychologist, social worker, lawyer, and marriage counselor that he had been in the military. One senses from reading his memoir that these years were the most hectic and fulfilling of his distinguished rabbinic career, and at no other time did he feel such warmth toward others as he did toward the Marines he counseled, taught, and buried.

3 Other titles considered were *Pacifist in Uniform* and *Pacifist No More*. The book also contains a biographical sketch of Gittelsohn, an introduction by Bishop, an essay by Gittelsohn about fellow chaplain Herbert Van Meter, and Gittelsohn's essay "Brothers All?," which discussed the eulogy and appeared in the *Reconstructionist* magazine shortly after the end of the war.

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Jeffrey S. Gurock, *Parkchester: A Bronx Tale of Race and Ethnicity* (New York: Washington Mews Books/New York University Press, 2019), xi + 308 pp.

In this readable book, Jeffrey Gurock tells the story of Parkchester, a middle-income private housing development—given its size, really a whole neighborhood—in the Bronx. The book’s subtitle proclaims it a “tale of race and ethnicity,” but it is also a tale of class. Moreover, it is a story about continuity and change in urban life. The continuity comes precisely in the area of class: Parkchester in the twenty-first century remains a middle-class enclave, as it was intended to be when it opened in 1940. The change comes in the ethnic and racial composition of the development’s population: In 1940 the residents, although from various ethnic groups, were all white. Seventy years later, most were Black, Latino, or Asian. Gurock uses oral histories and a range of documentary sources to tell this important story of ethnic succession, affordable housing, and neighborhood change and stability in New York City.

For the most part, the book’s tone is upbeat. Gurock grew up in Parkchester and clearly has affection for it. His quasi-insider status (he left a long time ago) also helped him gain access to past and present residents who provided him with insight into the texture of daily life in the area. He argues that Parkchester was remarkable for the degree to which various ethnic groups lived there in relative harmony, and that even the development’s racial transition was unusually peaceful. He thus shows that Parkchester’s history offers an alternative to such well-established narratives as that of endemic Irish-Jewish conflict. It also gives insight into the movement of racial minorities into “better” neighborhoods within the city, following in the footsteps of previous generations of

upwardly mobile New Yorkers. Finally, it illustrates the degree of diversity *within* New York's broader racial, religious, and ethnic categories.

Parkchester is a worthy addition to the literature on efforts to create and keep affordable housing in New York City. The neighborhood itself was developed by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (MLIC), with the aim to provide decent housing at modest cost and at the same time make a profit. For much of its history, Parkchester was a sort of company town with a paternalistic relationship to its tenants, some of whom indeed worked for the company. For example, project staff included not just maintenance workers, but also recreation directors whose job was to organize sports and other activities. The company also laid down strict rules for behavior, which were enforced by a uniformed, though unarmed, private police force. Some, especially young people, chafed at these regulations at the time, but many seem to recall them fondly.

There were, of course, precedents, successors, and competitive models to Parkchester. Gurock mentions MLIC's own much smaller earlier projects, as well as its more famous subsequent development—Manhattan's Stuyvesant Town. Public housing served as a foil to which residents could compare their own situation favorably. Unmentioned is the cooperative housing movement, a significant presence in the Bronx, which sought to provide good, affordable housing on a very different ideological basis. The exception is the massive Co-op City, which appears in its standard role as a factor that nearly killed not only Parkchester but also other Bronx neighborhoods by siphoning off the most desirable residents.

But Gurock's main interest is the people of Parkchester. At first, these were mostly white ethnics—Irish, Italians, Jews, and others. They were carefully vetted by MLIC on the basis of income (not too high, not too low), family status (there were singles, but married was better, and families with children better still), and good character. Religion, ethnicity, and national origin were not considered—except that all were white. For those lucky enough to be admitted, the neighborhood was a virtual paradise, with green spaces, play areas, and convenient shopping and transportation connections. Although there were no houses of worship on the grounds themselves, synagogues and churches ringed the complex, and religion played an important role in community life. Everyone got along, though they did not necessarily establish intimate friendships

across denominational lines. Especially significant, in Gurock's view, was the lack of the kind of tension that existed in other parts of the city between Irish Americans and Jews.

But the residents' whiteness was key. Parkchester operated according to the MLIC chairman's infamous dictum that "Negroes and whites don't mix." The company did everything it could to keep Blacks out well into the 1960s; if explicit exclusion became disreputable or illegal, bureaucratic and formalistic ones were erected in their place. Concerning this issue, then, the main villain is the company. What little evidence exists seems to indicate that residents were not opposed to desegregation but, for the most part, did little to alter the status quo. A few residents did join with outside civil rights, Jewish, Catholic, or leftist groups to protest the company's racist policies, but perhaps not as many, or not so tenaciously, as in Stuyvesant Town.

But beginning at the end of the 1960s, an ethnic transition did take place. African Americans and Latinos moved to Parkchester in increasing numbers, followed by immigrants from the Caribbean, Africa, Asia (apparently mainly South Asia), and the Middle East. By the second decade of the new century, there were virtually no white residents. Along with the racial and ethnic succession came a religious one. Jewish congregations slowly dwindled, and then finally disappeared. They were replaced by mosques and Hindu temples. One mosque even occupied the former building of Young Israel of Parkchester. Catholic and Protestant churches survived, but with new ethnic constituencies. The area's business districts also catered to the new residents, with one block even officially labeled the "Bangla Bazaar."

What the new residents had in common with their predecessors was their middle-class, often upwardly mobile, status. For a time, Parkchester faced hard times under the ownership of the Helmsley-Spear Corporation, which had bought the development in 1968. Conditions deteriorated, crime increased, and residents fought with the owners and with each other over plans to convert rental units into condominiums. But by the 2000s, things were looking up once again. Under new management, renovations were made and surrounding businesses were improved or revived. Most importantly, Parkchester continued to attract singles, couples, and families—often from other areas of the Bronx and

New York City—eager to find community and improve their living conditions at reasonable cost. Gurock's story is thus one of fundamental continuity underlying apparent change.

Daniel Soyer is professor of history at Fordham University. He is the editor of The Jewish Metropolis: New York from the 17th to the 21st Century (Academic Studies Press, 2021) and author of Left in the Center: The Liberal Party of New York and the Rise and Fall of American Social Democracy (Cornell University Press, 2021).

Dvora Hacoen, *To Repair a Broken World: The Life of Henrietta Szold, Founder of Hadassah* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021), 400 pp.

Dvora Hacoen has written the first book-length biography of Henrietta Szold in more than forty years. Other scholars have explored aspects of Szold's life, including her work with the early Jewish Publication Society, her involvement in the founding of Hadassah, and her role in developing public health and education in Palestine prior to the establishment of the State of Israel, but Hacoen treats her as a woman in full. *To Repair a Broken World*, skillfully translated from Hebrew by Shmuel Sermoneta-Gertel, spends nearly as much time on the decades of Szold's life prior to the founding of Hadassah—for which she is perhaps still best known in the United States—as it does on the decades thereafter. It is based on extensive archival research in both the United States and Israel and includes elements of Szold's life story not covered by the biographers, family members, and scholars who have previously written about her. Hacoen's unabashed admiration for her subject shines through every page, and it is difficult to finish reading *To Repair a Broken World* without sharing that assessment of an extraordinary woman.

Hacoen sees Szold's long life (1860–1945) as divided into roughly two parts. The outlines are familiar. In the first half, she served as her father Rabbi Benjamin Szold's amanuensis in Baltimore; became a teacher; pioneered the night school as a form of assistance to the Eastern European

immigrants flocking to the city; began to write for the national Jewish press; became secretary of the Jewish Publication Society, a role that required her skills as an editor, translator, and administrator, for low pay and little credit; and moved to New York after her father's death to study at the newly reorganized Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), though she was required to state she would not seek ordination. Throughout these years, as Hacoheh emphasizes, Szold repeatedly downplayed her individual needs and desires in order to do work she found meaningful.

The breaking point came when, as a student and an integral part of JTS's social circle, she met Louis Ginzberg, for whom she assumed the role of translator, editor, and collaborator. Szold fell deeply in love with Ginzberg and was crushed when he married another, much younger woman. With financial support from friends and colleagues, Szold left all her obligations behind and, accompanied by her mother, Sophie, sailed for Europe and Palestine in 1909 for an extended change of scenery. Already a committed Zionist, she was so shocked by the dreadful poverty and dire health conditions in Palestine that she decided to do something about it.

As the story goes, Szold founded Hadassah to carry out a kind of practical Zionism that would connect American Jewish women to the Jewish community in Palestine and put all their Progressive Era know-how to good use in improving public health there. But Hacoheh disrupts this familiar narrative, using new research to demonstrate that even after returning from her trip abroad, Szold remained emotionally shattered by what she (and others) saw as Ginzberg's betrayal. She seems to have suffered a bout of blindness that no one could say for sure was temporary, a devastating further blow to a woman of letters, and her family sent her to Miami to be nursed through this medical crisis. Not until the fall of 1911 did she recover enough to return to New York, at which point, Hacoheh argues, Szold began to rebuild her life along new lines. She did not immediately cease her work for the Jewish Publication Society and the Federation of American Zionists, but she immersed herself more in the world of women's social reform than had previously been the case and began to advocate for herself in new ways. She also developed a wider network of close women friends, most of them also single, educated, professional, and devoted to the Jewish people.

Hacohen sees the second half of Szold's life through this lens. She founded Hadassah, which quickly became more successful than any male-dominated American Zionist organization had ever been. She organized the American Zionist Medical Unit during World War I and then went to Palestine herself in 1920 to oversee the development of a public health system there, a task that required enormous administrative ability and effort. She occupied multiple leadership roles in the international Zionist movement and at the age of seventy became an elected member of the Yishuv's national council, with special responsibility for social work and education, both of which, once again, had to be developed from scratch. As the situation worsened for European Jews, she became a prime mover of Youth Aliyah, which, aided by Hadassah, brought more than 11,000 children to safety in Palestine.

By the time Szold died in 1945, she was an icon in the United States and Palestine alike and had improved the lives of untold numbers of people. Yet, Hacohen writes, on her deathbed Szold said, "I lived a rich life, but not a happy life" (7). This heartbreaking moment represents an element of *To Repair the World* that is both a strength and a weakness of the book. Recovering someone's emotional life is a tricky business for any biographer. Hacohen is aided by the voluminous, frank correspondence Szold kept up throughout her life with her sisters and most trusted friends. She mines these sources effectively and in so doing presents Szold as a real person, someone more than the sum of her many accomplishments. But there is also a lack of critical distance throughout the book that leads Hacohen to focus so much on her reading of Szold's inner life that she does not always supply adequate context for it, particularly in terms of modern Jewish women's history or even the larger social history of the Yishuv. Still, *To Repair the World* does important work in providing the fullest portrait yet of one of the most important figures in modern Jewish history.

Melissa R. Klapper is professor of history and director of women's and gender studies at Rowan University. Her two most recent books are Ballots, Babies, and Banners of Peace: American Jewish Women's Activism, 1890–1940, which won the National Jewish Book Award in Women's Studies, and Ballet Class: An American History.

Howard Mortman, *When Rabbis Bless Congress: The Great American Story of Jewish Prayers on Capitol Hill* (Brookline, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2020), 344 pp.

On 23 October 1973, I was honored to offer the opening prayer in the U.S. House of Representatives. Hence, I was eager to read Howard Mortman's book *When Rabbis Bless Congress: The Great American Story of Jewish Prayers on Capitol Hill*. What I found was a fascinating volume filled with details—a history book in the truest sense. Every page reflected an extraordinary amount of research.

Our Founding Fathers made provision for opening every session of the House and Senate with prayer, but it was not until 1860 that a rabbi was chosen to be guest chaplain. His name was Morris Raphall, and the *New York Times* reported that his prayer “was listened to with marked attention!” One hundred thirteen years later, I became the first Jewish woman to be guest chaplain—something *not* noted by the *New York Times*, even though I was invited by New York Congresswoman Bella Abzug, in whose district I lived. When I accepted Abzug's invitation, neither of us could have known what would be happening in Congress that day. I had been told that very few members of Congress would be present for the prayer, so when I arrived and saw a lot of people milling around, I was surprised. The reason why soon became apparent: The first resolution to impeach President Nixon was about to be introduced! Everyone was there that day, including Gerald Ford, who before long would become our next president.

I appreciated that the author of this book often alternated between narrative and bullet points; therefore, I choose to do the same in presenting these interesting facts, just a few examples of all that I learned from *When Rabbis Bless Congress*:

- Four hundred forty-one rabbis have offered the opening prayer in Congress, including fourteen female rabbis. Our colleague Joshua Haberman z”l of Washington Hebrew Congregation offered the opening prayer seven times. (Whenever the House or Senate chaplain was unavailable and no guest chaplain had been scheduled, it was not uncommon for a member of the clergy in the vicinity of

Washington, DC, to fill in.) The record belongs to Navy Chaplain Arnold Resnicoff, a Vietnam veteran who appeared sixteen times, eight in the House and eight in the Senate.

- The first rabbi to offer a prayer in the Senate was Isaac Mayer Wise on 21 May 1870. The *New York Times* later noted that he “was complimented by the Chaplain of the Senate, Dr. Newman, for its brevity. Dr. Wise promptly replied: ‘One of our sages explained all there is in religion while standing on one foot; why should not I be able to be brief while standing on both!’”
- The second foreign-born rabbi to deliver an invocation in the House was Leo Baeck, survivor of the Holocaust. He came before Congress on Abraham Lincoln’s birthday, 12 February 1948, and, quoting Lincoln—“We cannot escape history”—he prayed, “help us, O God, that we may not evade history, but may we be granted history.” His gratitude for all that America had given him was reflected in the way he concluded his prayer: “From the bottom of my heart I pray: God bless America.” Three months later, as Mortman notes, the Jewish people would be “granted history” as the modern State of Israel came into being, fulfilling in a sense Lincoln’s words in the Gettysburg Address for America, but equally applicable to the Jewish State: “this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom.”
- Among the most-cited passages from the Hebrew Bible in congressional prayers was the prophet Micah’s advice: “do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God.” Rabbi Gary P. Zola, one of a group of rabbis privileged to offer the opening prayer in both the House and the Senate, quoted this passage.
- Apparently, I was the first of three rabbis not to mention God in my prayer. I had forgotten that, but now I remember that in the 1970s there was a lot of talk about the separation of church and state, and I struggled to decide what to do. After all, I was still in my twenties, a rabbi for a year and a half. I was honored to be invited to give the opening prayer, but somewhat overwhelmed by the task. Ultimately, I chose the route of inclusion, allowing all people present that day to decide for themselves to whom they were praying.

When Rabbis Bless Congress is a valuable resource that should be on every rabbi's shelf and in every synagogue's library. Scattered throughout the book are the actual prayers that were offered, inspiring the reader to reflect on the themes, granting insight into the guest chaplains invited to speak, and providing some understanding of the times in which they lived. I cannot emphasize enough how impressed I was by the precise details shared here. The author's passion for the task at hand shines brightly, and we can be proud that the American Jewish Archives played a major role in gathering the necessary material and helping to put it in the context of history. The book itself serves as a reminder of the Jewish contribution to American democracy and how the Jewish community shares with all Americans a deep and abiding love for basic human values, thereby cherishing diversity and the many gifts that immigrants have brought to these shores. I highly recommend it.

Rabbi Sally J. Priesand served as spiritual leader of Monmouth Reform Temple in Tinton Falls, New Jersey, from 1981–2006, becoming rabbi emerita upon her retirement. She was ordained as America's first female rabbi by HUC-JIR in Cincinnati in 1972. She continues to serve as president of Interfaith Neighbors, in Asbury Park, New Jersey, an organization whose main mission is to provide rental assistance and support services to the working poor.

Anne Schenderlein, *Germany on Their Minds: German Jewish Refugees in the United States and Their Relationship with Germany, 1938–1988* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2020), 254 pp.

Anne Schenderlein's book, *Germany on Their Minds*, based on her dissertation at the University of California San Diego, explores how and why Germany continued to play an important role in the lives of Los Angeles-based German-Jewish refugees long after their flight from Germany in the years following 1933. She argues that their continued negotiations with Germany in past, present, and future were the result of America's growing focus on ethnic identities in the 1970s. In seven

chapters, she highlights the ongoing relationship these Jews had with Germany—the complicated, intense, and often-unexpected transnational interactions and identifications they carried into the postwar years.

Schenderlein's first chapter, "Background," briefly explains the prevailing German-Jewish realities and identities in the 1920s and how Nazism turned the German-Jewish experience gradually into a reason for flight and emigration. The chapter turns to the refugee experience, arriving in the United States and, particularly, to Southern California and the Los Angeles area, the second-largest population of German and German-Jewish refugees from Nazism. The author stresses that even in the midst of their difficult journeys, the refugees' German roots stood front and center with their new beginnings on the Pacific Coast.

The second chapter, "Americanization before 1941," explores the refugees' transition to becoming Americans once they had been stripped of their German citizenship. Explaining the political pressures the refugees faced—being perceived as Germans (and therefore Nazis)—Schenderlein highlights how this community managed to build a strong system of self-help to advance their Americanization. She highlights the way in which language, culture, and "appropriate social forms" were key to their negotiations of identity. She also stresses how German Jews shared their reflections with the larger German non-Jewish refugee community in the area, addressing questions such as whether the adjective "German" could be equaled with "Nazi." Under pressure to prove their loyalty to their new homeland, the refugees frequently shared their firsthand experiences of Nazism with American Jews, with the public, or with government agencies; in addition to educating these audiences, the practice also helped them to channel their anger and frustrations. They had two overwhelming needs: the desperate need to learn about their communities, families, and friends in Europe, a need that was answered in large part by the *Aufbau*—the German-Jewish paper, founded in 1934 and based in New York City, that served the dispersed global community; and the need to counter American legislation (the Alien Registration Act and, later, the Enemy Alien Act) that labeled them incorrectly as "Germans."

"The Enemy Alien Classification, 1941–1944," Schenderlein's third chapter, details how wartime legislation affected the status, standing, and belonging of refugees from Nazism. The passage of the Selective

Service Act and Second World War Powers Act of 1942 was particularly helpful; it allowed male refugees who had taken the oath of allegiance and filed first papers—that is, the initial filing to become a citizen—to enlist in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II. This not only provided special expertise to the American war effort but expedited the naturalization process of these men from five years down to two. Many young refugees grasped this opportunity.

The fourth chapter, “German-Jews in the U.S. Military,” investigates how these service members fared and what they contributed during their wartime service. Schenderlein explains that the experience aided greatly in the refugees’ Americanization but also confronted them with unexpected antisemitic stereotypes, suggesting that “German” may have been a more preferable identity than “Jewish” in that milieu. Their difficult hybrid identity also affected them in combat, in their treatment of POWs, and during the wartime and postwar occupation of Germany, when they returned to their former hometowns as Americans and victors. Their return to Germany engaged them in an unusual way in larger postwar discussions of the Shoah.

“German Jewish Refugees and the Wartime Discourse on Germany’s Future, 1942–1945,” the fifth chapter, deals with German-Jewish refugees’ intense engagement with the questions of whether Germans were misled by the Nazis or were fully responsible for the vast crimes committed all over Europe, and if and how Germany should be re-built after the war. Such debates occupied the pages of the *Aufbau*, and the U.S. government, military, and intelligence services valued the refugees’ expertise on Germany. Central to refugees’ concerns was restitution for lost property justice for crimes committed against them. Communal repatriation, the World Jewish Congress highlighted, was unthinkable after the Shoah; if there was to be any return, it would be on the individual level only.

The sixth chapter is titled, “German-Jewish Refugees and the West German Foreign Office in the 1950s and 1960s.” It starts with a look at West Germany’s postwar diplomatic missions and personnel in the United States, its recognition of Jewish victimhood, and the moral necessity for restitution. Although the German Foreign Office at home was still under the influence of many former (Nazi) diplomats, Schenderlein

highlights West Germany's efforts to find individuals to head its U.S. missions who were authentic and symbolized a new era of peace. The existence of a large refugee community in the United States even triggered the re-institution of a former German-Jewish diplomat, who had survived the war in Mexico and was restored to his office in Los Angeles in 1951.

While restitution could not bring back the lives of the six million Jews killed in the Holocaust, the Germans at least made the gesture to take responsibility for their atrocities. German consulates took the lead in the administrative and communicative processes of applying for and handling the claims of their former citizens. This triggered a new, if still difficult, encounter that ended in a mutual exchange of experts on restitution. This sign of goodwill created personal relationships and a working culture among Germans and German-Jewish refugees that also brought back some community leaders, such as the prominent Rabbi Max Nussbaum, to West Germany. Nussbaum became an unofficial broker of this relationship. Even though the conversations were troublesome and controversial, they gave the former refugees new and highly valued agency in their interactions with the country that had impacted their lives so dramatically.

In the mid-1960s, these first steps at interaction with Germany launched a large number of municipal visitor's programs and other trips to Germany, advertised in the pages of the *Aufbau*. This era, and its impact on the strands of the German-Jewish relationship, stands at the center of the discussion in chapter seven, "German Jewish Refugee Travel to Germany and West German Municipal Visitor Programs."

Schenderlein's book closes with a chapter that supports Hasia Diner's thesis in *We Remember with Reverence and Love*: that is, the centrality of the Holocaust and Nazism in the life of America's Jewish community. However, Schenderlein also highlights the very intense, nuanced, and differentiated relationship that the German-Jewish refugee community had with Germany—a relationship that was often necessary for these refugees to reassemble the fragmented pieces of their lives.

As the last representatives of a special blend of German and Jewish identity this community that had been shaped during the emancipation era in the 19th century and was never fully broken by Nazism played an active role beyond flight and expulsion into the postwar era.

Schenderlein's book highlights the unbroken agency of this group and their largely unknown role in German-American relations.

Cornelia Wilhelm is professor of modern history at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. She is the author of Bewegung oder Verein? Nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik in den USA and Pioneers of a New Jewish Identity: The Independent Orders of B'nai B'rith and True Sisters. Her new book, forthcoming from Indiana University Press, is The Last Generation of the German Rabbinate: German Refugee Rabbis in the United States, 1933–2010.

Allison E. Schottenstein, *Changing Perspectives: Black-Jewish Relations in Houston during the Civil Rights Era* (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2021), 432 pp.

Allison E. Schottenstein's *Changing Perspectives: Black-Jewish Relations in Houston during the Civil Rights Era* represents the latest trend in scholarship of the history of Black and Jewish relations in the United States—that is, pushing back against the so-called monolithic concept of the Black and Jewish alliance. Schottenstein presents a compelling set of thematic case studies centering on the history of Black and Jewish relations in the Lone Star State's most populous city, Houston. Spanning from the 1930s to the 1980s, the period Schottenstein focuses on spans the course of the long Civil Rights movement. She places Houston's story within the larger story of Black and Jewish relations in the Southern United States.

Building on Bryan Stone's *The Chosen Folks: Jews on the Frontiers of Texas*, *Changing Perspectives* provides a fresh view into the history of Houston Jewry and seeks to display the ways in which Houston's Jewish leaders grappled with issues of identity, civil rights, and the importance of their relationship with African American social and political leaders.

From the outset Schottenstein lets the readers know about the challenges of producing a history of Houston—one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the United States—that centers solely on Jewish and Black perspectives. Scholars such as Tyina L. Steptoe, in *Houston*

Bound: Culture and Color in a Jim Crow City, shed light on the city's vast multi-ethnic culture, including the Mexican American perspectives, that diverge in the midst of racially segregated Houston. Ultimately Schottenstein excludes the Mexican American experience, arguing that, although Texas had the largest Mexican American population in the Southwest, Jewish encounters with Mexican Americans were only minor, at least during the Civil Rights era. Moreover, her justification highlights the historical affinity of Jews in the affairs of African Americans and the negotiation between maintaining Jewish minority status and conforming to the White Protestant community. In spite of this approach, Schottenstein's work fills a significant gap within scholarship by shedding light on the importance of Houston in the development of Black and Jewish relations in the United States.

Schottenstein lays the foundation by first chronicling the advent and evolution of Black and Jewish communities in Houston beginning in the mid-nineteenth century and spanning into the 1930s. In discussing the development of both communities, she notes the early imbalance regarding both Black and Jewish populations. For example, in the 1850s the Black population accounted for 22 percent of the total population of 2,396; in comparison, there were only 17 Jews living in Houston at the time. By 1854 this small Jewish community would establish an Orthodox synagogue, Congregation Beth Israel, which would emerge as a pillar for Jewish social and political life in Houston. Meanwhile, formerly enslaved African Americans established "Freedmen's Towns," which would be the mainstays for Black social and political life. While both Black and Jewish communities continued to evolve, segregation meant they would do so for the most part separately, dealing with antisemitism and anti-Black racism independently. Schottenstein argues that segregation "instilled in Houston Jews, especially communal leaders, the need to prove they were similar to the white Gentiles and not a distinct group" (38).

The first two chapters largely focus on the lengths that Jews would go to protect themselves from antisemitism and to maintain their position as white Americans of Jewish faith. Schottenstein traces the foundation of the identity struggle to 23 November 1943, when committee members at Congregation Beth Israel presented a controversial principle to be included in future congregational membership applications: "Our

religion is Judaism. Our nation is the United States of America. Our nationality is American. Our flag is ‘the Stars and Stripes.’ Our race is Caucasian” (40). This shows the length that some Jewish leaders would go to in order to embrace the protection of whiteness.

Moreover, Schottenstein traces the ways in which this stance becomes complicated, specifically as African Americans in Houston began to openly deal with the realities of Jim Crow segregation. This placed the Jewish community in a difficult position, forcing them to shift gears and promote more of a communal focus. However, this became more challenging as America entered the Civil Rights movement. Following the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision (1954), Jewish leaders decided to support desegregation privately, in hopes of extinguishing the flames of antisemitism and accusations of communism. While *Brown* outlawed segregation within the school system, it also served as the Trojan horse for integration at large. Schottenstein follows the shift from segregation to integration within key neighborhoods throughout Houston, describing the continued vacillation within the Jewish community: “Enforcement of segregation in Houston’s neighborhoods created the belief that this was necessary to create harmony between whites and African Americans. The hysteria over integration was more of a destructive force than the integration itself” (155). The following two chapters chronicle how Houston’s Jewish business leaders—like Jewish leaders throughout the South—had to come to terms with desegregation, the fight against religion in schools, and the desegregation policies orchestrating how African Americans would seek to enter white schools.

Schottenstein’s last two chapters track the post-Civil Rights era political and social relationship between Jews and African Americans in Houston. This encompasses the period when Houston’s Jews began embracing their Jewish identity in hopes of reaching out to the African American community, just as the Black Power movement was emerging. In recounting this transition, Schottenstein argues that

Black and Jewish self-interest politics defined the mid-1960’s to 1970’s as both groups wanted attention placed on their struggles. The city’s Jews became preoccupied with their intrinsic international concerns, especially Israel.... The focus of the Houston Black community, on the other hand, centered on domestic issues and gaining full-class citizenship. (256)

In the end, Schottenstein argues that the influx of minorities, who demanded equal opportunity and systemic change, would usher in more “substantive interactions” between Houston’s African Americans and Jews. This demographic shift served as a catalyst for the war, informed by two Black and pro-Israel congressional leaders, Barbara Jordan and Mickey Leland, who would reach out to members of the Jewish community, facilitating the shift from “self-interest politics” to “mutual politics.”

Changing Perspectives provides a much-needed addition to the historiography of the Black and Jewish freedom struggle in the United States. Schottenstein’s argument is not new; however, its focus as a local case study presents an unapologetically complicated history of interactions between Jews and Blacks that is long overdue.

Charles L. Chavis Jr., PhD, is director of African & African American Studies, founding director of the John Mitchell Jr. Program for History, Justice, & Race at The Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, and assistant professor of History and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University. He is a recipient of the Rabbi Joachim Prinz Fellowship at The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives. He is the author of The Silent Shore: The Lynching of Matthew Williams and the Politics of Racism in the Free State. Chavis is national co-chair for the United States Truth Racial Healing and Transformation Movement and vice-chair of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Scott D. Seligman, *The Great Kosher Meat War of 1902: Immigrant Housewives and the Riots That Shook New York City* (Lincoln, NE: Potomac Books, 2020), 312 pp.

By the time the Lower East Side streets outside kosher butcher shops flooded with thousands of Jewish women and children in mid-May 1902, the stakes could hardly have been higher. Outraged by the falsely inflated cost of kosher meat, the rank-and-file women who orchestrated the kosher meat boycott that Scott D. Seligman elaborately depicts in

his book, *The Great Kosher Meat War of 1902*, decided by spring of that year that they had no choice but to take matters into their own hands. While readers doubtless know the likes of Rockefeller's Standard Oil, Carnegie's Steel Company, and Vanderbilt's railroad monopoly, the Beef Trust based in major Midwestern metropolitan centers has not attained the same degree of contemporary fame. In the early twentieth century, however, the Beef Trust achieved tremendous notoriety for, among other things, rendering the price of kosher meat beyond reach for predominantly immigrant, working-class Jewish families.

In a series of short, action-packed chapters, Seligman describes in minute detail how the tumultuous battle that pitted Jewish women against kosher butchers, themselves at the mercy of the meat barons who comprised the Beef Trust, unfolded. Thanks to the 1872 invention of refrigerated railcars, producers and suppliers could now ship foodstuffs that would easily spoil—like meat—across the country, dramatically changing the food industry. Not only did this technological development mean that Americans in one region could now send a greater quantity of fresh food far more cheaply and expeditiously to Americans in another, it enabled canny business operators from Midwestern cities to join forces to control the price of livestock, especially cattle.

As a direct result of this collusion, meat prices began to rise substantially. By 1901, when prices increased further, frustration among Lower East Side Jews who could scarcely afford to make ends meet, let alone purchase meat that conformed to the laws of *kashrut*, began to marinate. When the cost of kosher meat rose exponentially in 1902, thanks to price-fixing among the monopoly of Midwestern meat barons, tensions boiled over into what Seligman highlights as American Jewish women's first major organizing effort. Using contemporaneous Yiddish and English newspaper articles, Seligman brings to life the groundbreaking women omitted from prior narratives—women such as Paulina Finkel, Sarah Edelman, and Fanny Levy—who placed advertisements in the Yiddish press to call for a mass meeting of their "sisters" (81). To the shock of the men who watched derisively, Finkel, Edelman, and Levy met with unparalleled success. Hundreds of Jewish women of diverse national backgrounds and political affiliations, who did not all speak English or even the same dialect of Yiddish, responded to

their call, overflowing the five-hundred-seat hall where the organizers convened their gathering. Together, they agreed to boycott Lower East Side butcher shops unless butchers would sell to them for no more than twelve cents a pound (equal to approximately \$3.82 today).

Differing from other boycotts that pitted workers against bosses, or grew out of scarcity, this boycott hinged upon these women's argument with their own coreligionists. They concentrated their rage on community butchers whom they contended had sold them out and gone over to the side of the meat barons, leaving their families to starve. As planned, the morning following the meeting, small groups of women blocked the way to each butcher shop, hoping to persuade potential consumers to stand with them and refrain from buying until the butchers agreed to lower prices. When that failed, they targeted their local butchers and even their friends and neighbors who dared to cross the picket lines to buy meat for their families. While they intended for their boycott to remain peaceful, it swiftly deteriorated into violence and arrests, spreading across the boroughs and into nearby states in subsequent months and years.

Yet as Seligman points out, despite these women's legitimate indignation, their anger misaligned with the real offenders driving up the cost of kosher meat—the Beef Trust. Instead, they contended that their local butchers had acceded to the elites and manipulated prices to make up their own losses at their neighbors' expense. In reality, though, Seligman illustrates that the Midwestern meat barons victimized the small butchers who could barely turn a profit, many of whom never recovered from the boycott, just as much as they wronged the women who struggled to put food on their families' tables. Over the next two decades, the Beef Trust persisted in controlling prices, sparking periodic strikes grounded on the precedent of the 1902 boycott, and led to the 1905 Supreme Court case *Swift & Co. v. United States* in which the Court declared—albeit to minimal practical effect—that Congress had the authority to regulate the Beef Trust. The Beef Trust, however, continued to dictate meat prices until Woodrow Wilson's Justice Department forcibly broke up its monopoly.

Seligman's compelling book is, first and foremost, a master class in historical storytelling. Immediately captivating and readily accessible,

he restores a relatively little-known event outside of Jewish studies circles to the historical canon. Impressively, he contextualizes the boycott, routinely siloed within the confines of Jewish history, into the broader sweep of American history, explaining how technological innovations in one part of the country ignited a chain of events that culminated in Jewish working-class women holding a massive demonstration that reverberated throughout labor movements to come. Perhaps most important, he centers key women who made it happen and allows them to speak, at least as reported in the newspapers of the time. That said, the book is not without its flaws. Seligman acknowledges in his preface that the paltry number of sources revealing “accurate, three-dimensional portraits of the women and their inner lives” (xii) presented a challenge to the point where he almost could not write the book. As such, though using newspaper articles allowed him to tell the story, his dependence upon press reports still means that the women’s voices themselves remain mediated. Additionally, in introducing his topic, he relies too heavily on the standard narrative of pogroms and persecution in driving Jews to American shores and tends to elide differences among Jewish immigrants. How unanimous were these Jews in supporting the boycott? Did any women speak out against it for religious, philosophical, or practical reasons? What kind of gendered tensions did it provoke? Nonetheless, *The Great Kosher Meat War of 1902* is a welcome contribution to Jewish historical literature that both general and academic readers would enjoy, and that would prove an excellent addition to an undergraduate syllabus on gender studies, women’s history, labor history, or the history of New York.

Hannah Zaves-Greene received her doctorate in American Jewish history from New York University’s Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies. Her dissertation, “Able to Be American: American Jews and the Public Charge Provision in United States Immigration Policy, 1891–1934,” explores how American Jews responded to discrimination against immigrants on the basis of health, disability, and gender, in both federal law and its enforcement. She has taught classes at Cooper Union and the New School for Social Research. She is currently a visiting professor at Sarah Lawrence College.

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