
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 politicization 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.

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Dvora Hacoheh, *To Repair a Broken World: The Life of Henrietta Szold, Founder of Hadassah* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021), 400 pp.

Dvora Hacoheh 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 Hacoheh 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. Hacoheh'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.

Hacoheh 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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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