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# AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

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## Jewish 48'ers in America\*

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In the intervening century since the first "refugees" fled to America after the failure of the Revolutions which swept through Central Europe in 1848, the appellation "Forty-Eighter" has undergone an interesting development. Originally applied only to those persons who had participated in the European Revolutions and who then migrated to America because of personal disillusionment or the fear of government reprisal, the term has come to be used so loosely that some recent commemorative articles have regarded as "Forty-Eighters" certain intellectuals who came to America as early as 1833 and almost anyone who left Germany between 1848 and 1860. It is essential, however, that a study of any group of immigrants define the nature of that group clearly and exactly.

The question of delimiting the term "Forty-Eighter" is not new.

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Nine years ago Professor Marcus Hansen, after an exhaustive study of the numerous economic, social, political and personal factors which inspired Central Europeans to pull up stakes and turn towards America, concluded that "taken altogether, the political refugees who emigrated to America numbered only a few thousand."<sup>1</sup> If we wish to include military veterans of the Revolutionary campaigns, who might have remained in Europe if they had preferred to do so, we should in all likelihood have to double Hansen's estimate.

The truth of this conclusion, at least as it applies to Jewish "Forty-Eighters," has become increasingly evident to the writer in

<sup>1</sup>Marcus L. Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration: 1607-1860*, Cambridge, 1940, p. 274. Hansen's estimate has been supported by the research of Professor A. E. Zucker of the University of Maryland and a number of other scholars who have collaborated on the preparation of *The Forty-Eighters*, a centenary volume to be published by Columbia University Press this fall. Restricting themselves to Revolutionary "Forty-Eighters" who came to the United States from German-speaking countries, the authors were able to locate only about three hundred persons of all denominations.

A number of reasons may be posited to explain this comparatively small number of political refugees who came to America. Many of the supporters of the Revolutions did not have to flee for their lives; unwilling to give up hope, they determined to remain and outwait the reactionary regimes. Others, including some who served out prison sentences or who fled to exile in nearby European havens, could not be diverted from their objectives by one failure; they were determined to stay at home, or at least in Europe, to continue to work for the triumph of liberal principles. Yet another reason which deterred many from making the trip to America was a fairly common conception of America as an uncultured outpost of civilization. And, finally, there were the natural inertia and reluctance to pull up stakes which characterize most people.

It cannot be denied, however, that the downfall of the Revolutionary regimes was responsible for increased emigration to America in the years after 1848. Thousands of persons who had taken no active role in the fighting were completely disillusioned with life in Europe after the return of the reactionaries to power; a factor which contributed to that disillusionment was the post-1848 economic slump. Although the events of 1848 were most assuredly responsible, in the final analysis, for this post-1848 emigration, the persons who composed it cannot accurately be called "Forty-Eighters."

Outbreaks of anti-Semitism during and after the Revolutions were a signal for schemes of mass emigration of Jews to America, suggested on both sides of the Atlantic. See the excerpts from the *Oesterreichisches Central-Organ für Glaubensfreiheit, Cultur, Geschichte und Literatur der Juden*, by Isidor Busch, Leopold Kompert and others, cited by Professor Guido Kisch in "The Revolution of 1848 and the Jewish 'On to America' Movement," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society (=PAJHS)*, No. XXXVIII, Pt. 3 (March 1949), pp. 185-234. See also the letter by an enthusiastic Texan, calling for a mass exodus of Jews from Central and Eastern Europe to America, and particularly to Texas, where "thousands of acres of land can be bought, within the settled portions of the State, for the small sum of from 25 cents to \$1 per acre; good arable, fertile land, where a man can make his living to his liking, and more independent than the Autocrat of Russia, or the Emperor of Austria themselves." *The Asmonean (=ASM)*, II, No. 10, p. 76, June 23, 1850.

his research into the background of literally thousands of German-Jewish immigrants. There is no evidence whatever for the commonly accepted supposition that large numbers of them came to the United States. Only in the homiletical sense that practically all German-Jewish immigrants, whether they arrived in 1835 or 1865, came to this country in search of the personal opportunity, economic freedom, and political equality which were denied to them in Europe, only in that sense did multitudes of Jewish "Forty-Eighters" come to America.

Indeed, this is only what we should expect. The failure of the Revolutions was no more than another blow to the Jews of Central Europe. They suffered repression, discrimination, and hostility all through the years, and needed no special political motivation for emigration. The year of their departure was, more often than not, purely coincidental. One of those who came to America in 1848, for instance, was Mayer Lehman, the founder of the great cotton and banking firm and father of Justice Irving and Governor Herbert Lehman. But it might just as well have been any other year, for his decision was utterly unconnected with the Revolution. He had merely been biding his time until he heard that his brothers Henry and Emanuel, who had preceded him to the United States, had successfully established themselves and were able to pay for his ocean passage.<sup>2</sup> Lazarus Straus, founder of a prominent American-Jewish family famous for government service and the development of a great institution known as Macy's, also left Bavaria for economic reasons. He despaired of any future in his home and so set out in 1852 for the land of opportunity across the sea.<sup>3</sup> The Brandeis-Wehle clan, whose story has been told so well, were by no means "Pilgrims of '48" in the sense of being political refugees. Economic opportunity in the new world was undoubtedly an important motivation in their leaving Prague.<sup>4</sup> And so also with the Prussian family named Sutro who brought with them a twenty-year-old son named Adolph who was to build a tunnel called after his name and become mayor of San Francisco and own a sizeable portion of that city's real estate. The Sutro family had been in the cloth-manufacturing business, but the economic slump after the Revolution drove them into bankruptcy and forced their departure.<sup>5</sup>

These were only a handful of the more than fifty thousand Jews who left Central Europe between 1848 and 1860 to come to the

<sup>2</sup>Letter from Governor Herbert Lehman to the writer, August 22, 1948.

<sup>3</sup>Manuscript Memoirs of Isidor Straus. American Jewish Historical Society Library.

<sup>4</sup>Josephine Goldmark, *Pilgrims of '48*, New Haven, 1930, especially pp. 175-6.

<sup>5</sup>*Dictionary of American Biography* (=DAB), New York, 1936, XVIII, pp. 223-4.

United States, and though many of them have been mistakenly called "Forty-Eighters," there is no record of their actual participation in the Revolutions. It is to another group of men that we must turn — the twenty-eight men whom it has been possible to isolate and identify as "Forty-Eighters" in the literal sense — a very small number, but not so small if we bear in mind Marcus Hansen's estimate. And yet, just because they constitute so small a group, it is possible to study them in some detail and to arrive at demonstrable conclusions about their experience in America. We tend to generalize very easily about multitudes. A group of twenty-eight men is small enough to permit a thorough study.

Most of our group of twenty-eight were, of course, not prominent Revolutionaries, but obscure young men who had followed the leadership of older men. They were as young and inexperienced with life and unheralded by fame as most other immigrants. It was in America that they lived the major portion of their lives and earned whatever success they ever came to achieve. There were two exceptions, however, two men whose names were familiar to those who had followed the course of the Revolutions: Abraham Jacobi and Joseph Goldmark. Goldmark had been a member of the student cabal which directed the course of the rebellion in Vienna. With the fall of the city in October of 1848 he had to flee to Switzerland to avoid trial and execution for treason.<sup>6</sup> Jacobi had been an intimate of Carl Schurz and the other leaders in Baden. He was arrested in 1849 and suffered imprisonment for two years before a friendly warden permitted his escape to America.<sup>7</sup>

Jacobi and Goldmark found a warm welcome awaiting them among the intellectual elite of the German-American community.<sup>8</sup> They were regarded as heroes who had sacrificed all for the sake of liberty. Most of the others found no welcome, however, and had to join the hosts of other immigrants in adjusting to the life of their new home. Coming to the United States with family groups or friends, they scattered abroad throughout the country. Only a few stayed in New York. The others found their way to Philadelphia, Richmond, St. Louis, Watertown (Wisc), Indianapolis, and Hartford. Three, August Helbing, Moritz Meyer and William Langerman, arrived

<sup>6</sup>Goldmark, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-70.

<sup>7</sup>*Medical Life*, XXXV, Nos. 6-7 (May, June 1928), pp. 214-15, 225; news of Jacobi's arrest and trial reached New York Jewry through *ASM*, I, No. 10, p. 75, Dec. 28, 1849.

<sup>8</sup>Goldmark's arrival in America was signaled by a lead editorial in *ASM*, II, No. 20, p. 156, Sept. 6, 1850, which concluded with the hope "that his condition in this country may compensate him for what he has lost in the battles and struggles of the fatherland."

just in time to join the gold-attracted throngs who were making the arduous trip to California.<sup>9</sup>

Settled in new homes, they turned to the challenge of earning a living and carving a place for themselves in American society. The physicians and journalists, naturally, had less difficulty than their non-professional counterparts. American medicine was in sore need of trained recruits from Europe and the growing German-American population created many opportunities for publicists.

Abraham Jacobi's subsequent medical career in America completely overshadowed his revolutionary activities in Europe. Regarded by medical historians as "the father of pediatrics in America," his contribution to American medicine was inestimable. The respect and affection in which he was held by his colleagues was demonstrated by the number of honors which they showered upon him. He was elected to the presidency of many medical societies, including the American Medical Association, and received honorary degrees from Michigan, Harvard, Yale, and Columbia Universities. During his lifetime he occupied chairs in pediatrics at the College of Surgeons and Physicians of N. Y., New York Medical College, Columbia University, and the City College of New York.<sup>10</sup>

Another medical "Forty-Eighter" to achieve prominence in America was Ernst Krackowitzer, who had been a lesser known member of the Viennese student council which directed various phases of the Revolution. In New York he became an outstanding surgeon, president of the Pathological Society, a contributor to the pioneer American medical journals and a leading staff member of many New York hospitals. Jacobi, who idolized Krackowitzer and named his son after him, called him "the most eminent American physician of European birth."<sup>11</sup>

Joseph Lewi had been an intimate co-worker of the Austrian intellectuals who had inspired the Revolution, but emigrated even before the fall of Vienna because he was convinced that the revolt could not succeed. He settled in Albany and became one of the most popular physicians of that city, serving terms as President of the Albany County Medical Society and senior member of the Board of Censors of the New York State Medical Society. During the Civil War he was attached to the Albany board of medical examiners.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup>For Helbing and Meyer, Israel T. Naamani, "Gold Rush Days," *Commentary*, Sept. 1948, pp. 260-1; for Langerman, *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* (=UJE), New York, 1939-43, VI, p. 532.

<sup>10</sup>*Medical Life*, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-258.

<sup>11</sup>Abraham Jacobi, "The Most Eminent Physician of European Birth," *American Medicine*, IX, No. 18, pp. 740-743, May 6, 1905.

<sup>12</sup>Undated obituary clippings loaned to the writer by Miss Alice Lewi, Albany. Lewi died Dec. 19, 1897.

Both a physician and a journalist was Edward Morwitz, who had been a revolutionary propagandist in Konitz. He settled in Philadelphia and practiced both professions, establishing the German Dispensary in that city and serving as publisher-editor of the German-language *Demokrat*. After the Civil War he was instrumental in the creation of the German Press Association of Pennsylvania, and eventually owned a controlling interest in a large number of German-American newspapers and magazines.<sup>13</sup>

Charles Bernays became associate editor of a St. Louis German paper;<sup>14</sup> David Blumenfeld was a partner in the firm which published the first Watertown German paper, *Der Anzeiger*, which Carl Schurz edited in 1857;<sup>15</sup> Michael Heilprin ultimately became one of the editors of Appleton's *New American Cyclopaedia* and a foreign affairs writer for the old *Nation*.<sup>16</sup>

Isidor Busch, who had published and edited several of the Revolutionary newspapers in Vienna, founded a German-Jewish weekly in New York a short time after his arrival in 1849, but had to abandon the venture after a very few issues. He moved on to St. Louis and decided to go into business. He was, at various times, a banker, storekeeper and politician, as well as the first Missouri viniculturist.<sup>17</sup>

Another professional was Isaac Hartman, who had edited the republican *Observer of Eastern Franconia* after a few years as head of a Jewish school in Kissingen, Bavaria. Imprisoned in Würzburg after the fall of the revolutionary party, he was fortunate enough to have friends who arranged for his escape — first to England, then on to America. Arrived in New York, he supported himself by teaching languages at various private schools, until advanced tuberculosis sent him into the newly-created Jews' Hospital of New York, where he died on August 13, 1855.<sup>18</sup>

The non-professional "Forty-Eighters" entered a variety of trades. Meyer Thalmessinger, who had taken part in the Parisian Revolution, eventually headed a prosperous printing and lithographing firm and was elected president of a New York bank.<sup>19</sup> Joseph Goldmark gave up the practice of medicine and established a percussion-cap factory in New York.<sup>20</sup> Tobias Kohn brought with him the latest European

<sup>13</sup>*DAB*, XIII, pp. 271-2; Henry S. Morais, *The Jews of Philadelphia*, Phila., 1894, pp. 340-2.

<sup>14</sup>*The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz*, New York, 1908, II, p. 40.

<sup>15</sup>Ralph D. Blumenfeld, *Home Town*, London, 1944, p. 14.

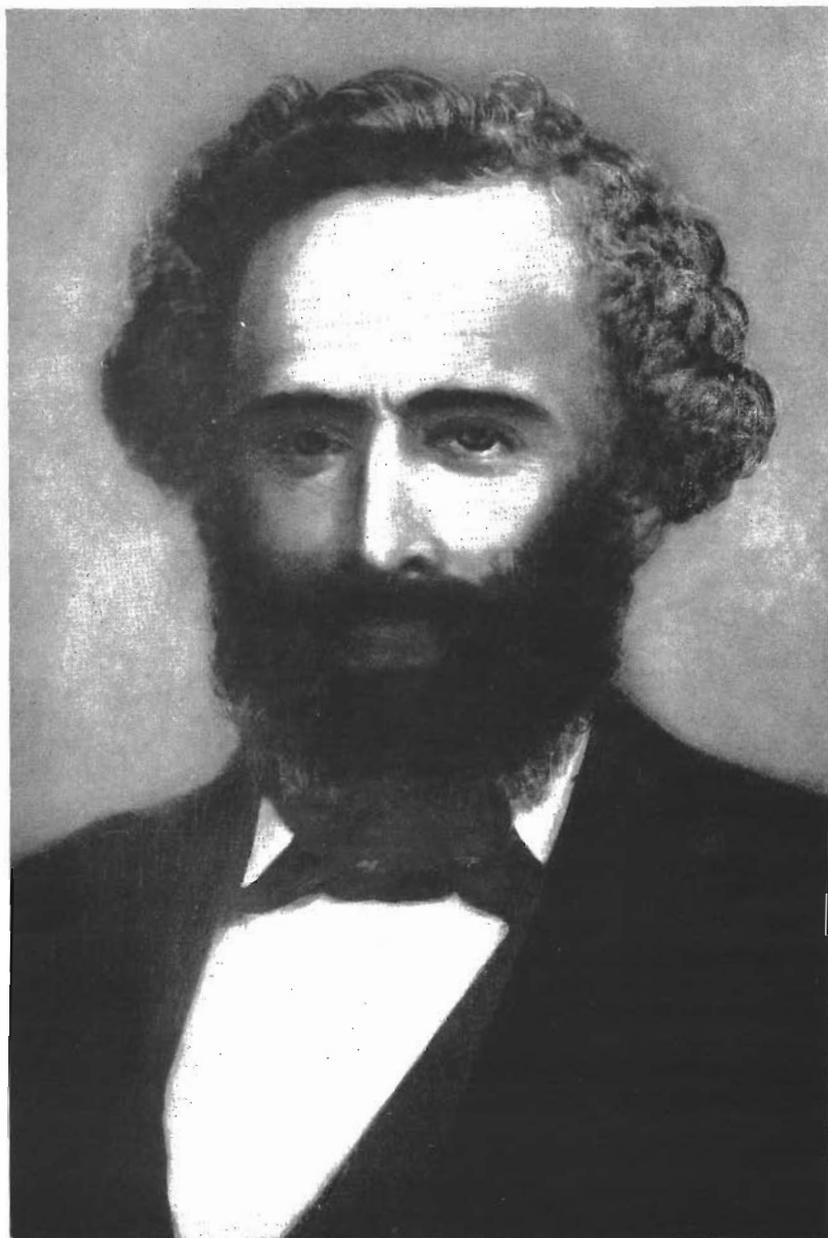
<sup>16</sup>Gustav Pollak, *Michael Heilprin and His Sons*, N. Y., 1912.

<sup>17</sup>*The Reformer and Jewish Times*, X, No. 51, p. 3, Feb. 14, 1879.

<sup>18</sup>*ASM*, XII, No. 10, p. 148, Aug. 24, 1855.

<sup>19</sup>*UJE*, X, p. 259.

<sup>20</sup>Goldmark, *op. cit.*, p. 259.



*Courtesy of Missouri Historical Society*

ISIDOR BUSCH — MISSOURI ABOLITIONIST

techniques in silk-manufacturing and opened a plant in Hartford.<sup>21</sup> Helbing and Langerman opened stores in San Francisco. Julius Bien became one of the outstanding lithographers in America. For many years, it is said, "scarcely a major geographical or geological publication [was] issued by the federal government for which the maps were not engraved and printed by Bien." He received many medals for his work and served as president of the National Lithographers' Association for thirteen years.<sup>22</sup>

Nathan Grossmayer, an Austrian who had been wounded in the street fighting in Paris, was one of the unluckiest of the "Forty-Eighters." On first coming to the United States he peddled his way through the South until he had enough money to open a store in Macon, Ga. Before his death in 1891, he had been in business in New York City, Hoboken, Baltimore, Washington, Houston and Galveston, Indianola (Tex.), Titusville (Pa.), and Denver. His successes were many -- at one time he possessed a chain of five stores in various Texas localities, and at another time he owned a sizeable interest in some Pennsylvania oil fields -- but some misfortune always defeated his enterprise and forced him to move on.<sup>23</sup>

August Bondi was too smitten with a love of adventure to settle down for a long time after he came to the United States in 1848. He had been one of the youngest members of the students' corps in Vienna -- fourteen years old! His family settled in St. Louis and he shifted from one unsatisfactory job to another, meanwhile looking for excitement. During a trip to Texas he attempted to enlist in the Lopez-Crittenden expedition to Cuba, and failing in that tried to obtain a berth in the Perry mission to Japan. Back in St. Louis, he finally decided to go to the Kansas frontier where there was adventure enough for a young boy. It was not long before he joined up with John Brown's men, taking part in every major engagement of the bloody border warfare. As Bondi was to write in his autobiography, "To use President Roosevelt's mode of expression, I was most anxious for a strenuous life. I was tired of the hum-drum life of a clerk. Any struggle, any hard work would be welcome to me. I thirsted for it, for adventure. . . ." <sup>24</sup> Small wonder that setting type, waiting on store, keeping books, or teaching in a backwoods school, all of which he tried during his first years, couldn't hold him down for very long.

It was not only the thirst for adventure, however, that stirred

<sup>21</sup>*UJE*, VI, pp. 434-5.

<sup>22</sup>*UJE*, II, pp. 350-1.

<sup>23</sup>Information and documents provided by his son, Max Grossmayer. Deposited in American Jewish Archives.

<sup>24</sup>*Autobiography of August Bondi*, Galesburg (Ill.), 1910, p. 33.

this young man, for August Bondi was indeed an inflamed liberal. He wrote of his Viennese days: "I became imbued with hatred of spiritual and governmental tyranny . . . [and with] devotion to humanity. We boys were fairly fanaticized with sympathy for the downtrodden of the globe."<sup>25</sup> He fought with John Brown because he was convinced that the spread of slavery was a danger to the welfare of the western frontier, and, when the Civil War broke out, his liberal spirit again sent him into the military fray. He served for three years through many a difficult campaign.

Most of the Jewish "Forty-Eighters," like Bondi, maintained their devotion to liberal principles in America. Some became outspoken adherents of abolitionism almost as soon as they reached America. Michael Heilprin, who had been one of the propagandists for the Kossuth Hungarian Revolution, was almost mobbed at a Frémont meeting in Philadelphia when he delivered a fiery speech against the defenders of slavery. In 1861, he was the first to denounce Rabbi Morris J. Raphall for his attempt to prove that slavery had the sanction of the Jewish Bible.<sup>26</sup> Isidor Busch, in St. Louis, was elected to the Missouri legislature for three terms during the Civil War, and, throughout the sessions, was one of the most extreme abolitionists in office.<sup>27</sup>

Even if abolitionism did not draw them to its banners, most of the Jewish "Forty-Eighters" became ardent supporters of the Republican party. Joseph Goldmark was one of the organizers of the King's County Republican Club<sup>28</sup> and Joseph Lewi was a founder of the Albany Union League. Sigismund Kaufmann was a Republican Presidential Elector in 1860 and wielded, it is said, much influence in the distribution of federal patronage throughout New York state.<sup>29</sup> August Bondi's diary records the large number of early Republican meetings which he and his non-Jewish German friends attended in St. Louis. Nathan Grössmayer was a passionate devotee of Lincoln during the Civil War years, believing in him so deeply that, according to an early will, he bequeathed his all to the President for charitable purposes in the event that the war should still be raging when Grossmayer died.

What Jacobi wrote of his friend Krackowitzter probably characterized the majority of the Jewish "Forty-Eighters":

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid*, p. 27.

<sup>26</sup>Pollak, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-70; E. M. F. Mielziner, *Moses Mielziner 1828-1903*, New York, 1931, pp. 224-234, for complete text of Heilprin's answer.

<sup>27</sup>James A. Wax, "Isidor Bush, American Patriot and Abolitionist," *Historia Judaica*, V, No. 2, pp. 183-203, Oct. 1943.

<sup>28</sup>Goldmark, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

<sup>29</sup>Isaac Markens, "Lincoln and the Jews," *PAJHS*, No. XVII (1909), pp. 137-8.

"He did not *drift* into politics; he was a born politician, for he lived, soul and heart, with the people, its development, growth, efforts, its happiness and unhappiness. . . . No oppression or injustice found grace before his eyes. Thus he was a freesoiler, thus he was an abolitionist; no matter whether the chains to be broken were those of color, or religion, or sex. . . . He supported Frémont, supported Lincoln, supported energetically the war for the Union. . . ." <sup>30</sup>

The Civil War aroused not only the political passions of the "Forty-Eighters," but also their military bent. A war-time correspondent of the *Jewish Messenger* stated in one of his Washington dispatches that

"Some of the Jewish officers and privates told me that they had taken part in the Crimean, Hungarian and Italian wars, and that they followed the profession of arms from inclination, but not liking the dull routine of a soldier's life in times of peace, they eagerly availed themselves of every opportunity to return to their tents and the battlefield. This was the first time I had ever heard of the existence of such a class of military adventurers among our people." <sup>31</sup>

Would that the *Messenger's* correspondent had taken the trouble to write down their names and stories, for we know only two of these "Forty-Eighters" who became soldiers of fortune.

One was Louis Schlessinger, a veteran of the Kossuth campaigns, who stayed in the United States only a short time before joining the Walker filibuster in Nicaragua. He was given the rank of colonel by his chief but must have had a severe dispute with him because after a few battles he was fighting for the legitimists, retaining his high rank, of course. After the conflict ended, Schlessinger moved to Guatemala and lived out his life as the owner of a coffee plantation. <sup>32</sup>

The other was Adolphus Adler who was commissioned a colonel in the Confederate Army at the outbreak of the Civil War. Adler was a brusque, high-spirited adventurer with a nasty temper. When an anti-Jewish editorial appeared in the Richmond *Enquirer* he challenged its editor to a duel. The editor preferred to apologize rather than risk death. A little later, Adler's temper got him into a worse scrape. He became embroiled in a violent argument with a general in command of the Richmond fortifications and was thrown into prison on suspicion of being a Union sympathizer. This was more humiliation than an officer could bear, so he attempted to commit

<sup>30</sup>Jacobi, *op. cit.*, p. 743.

<sup>31</sup>*The Jewish Messenger*, XI, No. 5, p. 41, Feb. 7, 1862.

<sup>32</sup>*UJE*, IX, p. 410.

suicide, but only ended up in a Richmond Hospital. Ashamed to stand trial, he escaped from the hospital and smuggled himself across the lines to the North. We next find him in Cincinnati, again under arrest, this time on the natural assumption that he was a Confederate spy. He convinced the authorities that he had given up the Confederate cause and then faded from sight. The *Israelite* advertised in vain that it had some letters for delivery to him; he was not heard from again. One cannot but regret that there is no record of his further experiences in America.<sup>33</sup>

The highest ranking Jewish officer of the Civil War was also a "Forty-Eighter." Frederick Knefler had served with Kossuth in Hungary at the age of fifteen before moving to Indianapolis with his family. He volunteered for service with the Union Army a few days after Sumter and was commissioned a lieutenant. His superiors recognized his ability and promoted him so rapidly that he was a Colonel by the time of the great Chickamauga campaign in 1863. During that great battle he led two Indiana regiments up the slopes of Missionary Ridge, one of the most famous feats in all military history. His role in that battle earned him the further promotion to the rank of Brigadier General.<sup>34</sup>

Not all of the Jewish "Forty-Eighters" were passionate Republicans, of course. Abraham Jacobi, strangely enough, appears to have taken little interest in the Civil War, although his friendship with Schurz and other German-American leaders continued unabated. In practically every other important question, immigration restriction, Civil Service reform, slum clearance, to name only a few, Jacobi was always to be found on the side of the liberals and reformers.<sup>35</sup> Edward Morwitz had become a Democrat immediately upon his arrival in Philadelphia and maintained his loyalty to that party all through the years of slavery agitation and war. Liberalism did not have the same meaning for all "Forty-Eighters."

It is natural to think of "Forty-Eighters" as leaders in the life of the German-American community. The Jews among them were no exception. They belonged to the German societies and participated eagerly in their programs and activities. Busch was for twelve years president of the German Immigration Aid Society of St. Louis. Kauf-

<sup>33</sup>Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, Chapel Hill, 1940, pp. 177-8; Frank Moore (ed.) *Rebellion Record*, N. Y. 1862, III, p. 51; *The Israelite*, IX, No. 24, p. 188, Dec. 19, 1862; X, No. 8, p. 59, Aug. 21, 1862.

<sup>34</sup>Information provided by Rabbi Morris Feuerlicht, Indianapolis; G. M. Cohen, "Indiana's Great Jewish Civil War General," *Jewish Post*, New Year's Edition, (Oct.) 1941, pp. 4-5, 60-61.

<sup>35</sup>*Medical Life*, *op. cit.*, p. 246; Oswald Garrison Villard, "Abraham Jacobi - The Last of the Forty-Eighters," *The Nation*, July 19, 1919, pp. 74-5.

mann was a founder of the N. Y. Turnverein and president of the German Society of New York. Krackowitz was largely responsible for the founding of a German Dispensary in New York, as was Morwitz in Philadelphia. Jacobi was, year after year, a favorite speaker at German meetings and gatherings in New York. The journalists, of course, were even more closely involved in the life of the German community, because their professional work coincided with its activities.

These Jewish "Forty-Eighters" were, like their non-Jewish counterparts, deeply devoted to the culture and civilization which they left behind in Europe. Many of them never lost their ardent German nationalistic spirit, and the fact that certain aspects of American life appeared to be inferior to their European background helped keep them loyal to Germany. But that loyalty rarely overcame the bitter memories of the Revolutionary years. When Goldmark went back to Vienna in 1868-69 to clear his name and reputation, his Austrian friends begged him to remain. But he was firm in his decision to build his future in the United States. Abraham Jacobi, in his later years, was invited to occupy the chair in pediatrics in Berlin, a supreme tribute to his professional achievement, but he would not consider leaving America.

For some of the Jewish "Forty-Eighters" this ambivalent loyalty to German culture on the one hand and American life on the other did not leave much room for Judaism. Partly because they shared the antagonism of the German intellectual towards all religion, partly because they were convinced that all barriers between men should be broken down, some of them abandoned their Jewish background. Jacobi<sup>36</sup> and Knefler lost almost all contact with Jews as Jews, and completed the process by intermarriage. Even though his sister was married to one of the rabbinical leaders of American Jewry — Bernhard Felsenthal of Chicago — David Blumenfeld took so little interest in Judaism that he permitted his children to attend services and classes in both Catholic and Protestant churches in Watertown.<sup>37</sup> Charles Bernays, the St. Louis journalist, is the only Jewish "Forty-Eighter"

<sup>36</sup>Jacobi's only known affiliation with a Jewish institution was his service as an Attending Physician at the New York Jews' Hospital and his continuing relationship to its staff after it became known as Mt. Sinai Hospital. *The Story of the First Fifty Years of The Mount Sinai Hospital, 1852-1902*, New York, 1944, pp. 29-31. A Dr. Jacobi (possibly this one) lectured to the Maimonides Library Association of New York in 1855, on the subject, "A Solution of the Slavery Question," Hyman B. Grinstein, *The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York 1654-1860*, Phila., 1945, p. 204.

<sup>37</sup>Blumenfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 12; data provided by Rabbi Joseph L. Baron of Milwaukee.

actually known to have been converted to Christianity.<sup>38</sup> Others, like the Goldmark family, drifted into a kind of vague cosmopolitanism which was frequently a secular "religion" among Jews who had no interest in religion. Thus, Joseph Goldmark's daughters married two Jewish youths who typified the liberalism of 1848, neither of whom was a Jew religiously: Felix Adler, the founder of the Ethical Culture movement, and Louis D. Brandeis, who was empty of any Jewish interest until the Zionist movement fired his spirit just before the first World War. Jacobi expressed this liberal philosophy when, during the heat of the Franco-Prussian War, he spoke on behalf of German physicians in this wise:

"These men speak the language of the human mind, they are the leading citizens of the universal world-republic of science to which we all, equal, free, and fraternal, have sworn allegiance. There is no blockade, no fire, no Franco-German War, that will ever disprove our belonging to the same community. The progress of one man, of one country, is at the present day the common property of all men, all countries, and an isolated civilization or science belongs to the past. Let us hope, and every one at his own wheel-work, that the unity of science may be but the precursor of the unity of mankind. . . ."<sup>39</sup>

This indifference to Judaism was not typical of all of the "Forty-Eighters." John Proskauer joined a synagogue as soon as he settled in Richmond—and an orthodox congregation which observed the Spanish-Portuguese rites, at that! Known to have little personal interest in religion, his friends asked for an explanation. He really couldn't say what it was, but in a somewhat mystic manner he spoke of the preservation of ancient values and the maintenance of traditions, whether in accordance with the views of one man or not.<sup>40</sup> Years later his son became President of the congregation in Mobile, Alabama, and a grandson is honorary president of the American Jewish Committee. Isidor Busch was as violent a liberal as any other "Forty-Eighter," and yet Judaism had been supremely important to him in Europe and continued to be so in America. His editorship of the short-lived *Israels Herold* in New York was only the beginning

<sup>38</sup>Interestingly enough, Bernays became the central figure in a Jewish *cause celebre* despite his conversion. In 1862 he was appointed American consul at Zurich. The Swiss still maintained discriminatory legislation against Jews, and hesitated before accepting Bernays' credentials. This was only one of a long series of episodes in connection with the Swiss-American commercial treaty. See Sol M. Strook, "Switzerland and American Jews," *PAJHS*, No. XI (1903), p. 50.

<sup>39</sup>*Medical Life*, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

<sup>40</sup>Data provided by John Proskauer's daughter, Miss Jenny Proskauer of St. Louis.

of years of devoted service to Jewish causes. One of his dominant interests was the B'nai B'rith Order, of which he was an active member on both a local and a national scale. An even more important figure in B'nai B'rith sprang from the ranks of the "Forty-Eighters," Julius Bien, during whose thirty-five years as President the brotherhood developed from a handful of lodges to one of the most powerful organizations in American Jewish life.

Dr. Joseph Lewi was an active member of the Albany congregation led by his friend, Isaac M. Wise, whom he had known in Radnitz, Bohemia, and, years later, sent his son Isidor to Cincinnati as an apprentice to Wise in the editorship of the *Israelite*. Sigismund Kaufmann served as a director of the New York Hebrew Orphan Asylum and of other Jewish philanthropic organizations. Michael Heilprin was one of the founders of the movement which organized agricultural settlements in America for refugees from the Russian pogroms of the 1880's, although throughout the previous years he had demonstrated only a faint intellectual interest in Judaism. August Bondi, out on the Kansas frontier, longed for the opportunity to attend Jewish services, and was greatly angered, according to his diary, when he discovered that the only two Jews in his Civil War regiment were not willing to acknowledge their background. In his will, he asked his children to perpetuate his name through a memorial at the Hebrew Union College.<sup>41</sup> Edward Morwitz appears to have devoted far more time to general German activities than those of a Jewish nature, but in addition to his participation in Philadelphia Jewry's philanthropies, there is the record of his publication (at a heavy loss) of the *Jewish Record* for a period of eleven years, as evidence of his Jewish sympathies.<sup>42</sup>

Among Jews, at least, the conception of "Forty-Eighters" as atheists and anti-religionists, therefore, requires some revision, especially in the light of the fact that there were four rabbis among our group of twenty-eight: Samuel Kalisch,<sup>43</sup> Henry Hochheimer,<sup>44</sup> Benjamin Szold<sup>45</sup> and Adolph Huebsch.<sup>46</sup> The first two had already entered the

<sup>41</sup>*Autobiography of August Bondi*, pp. 87-8, 133.

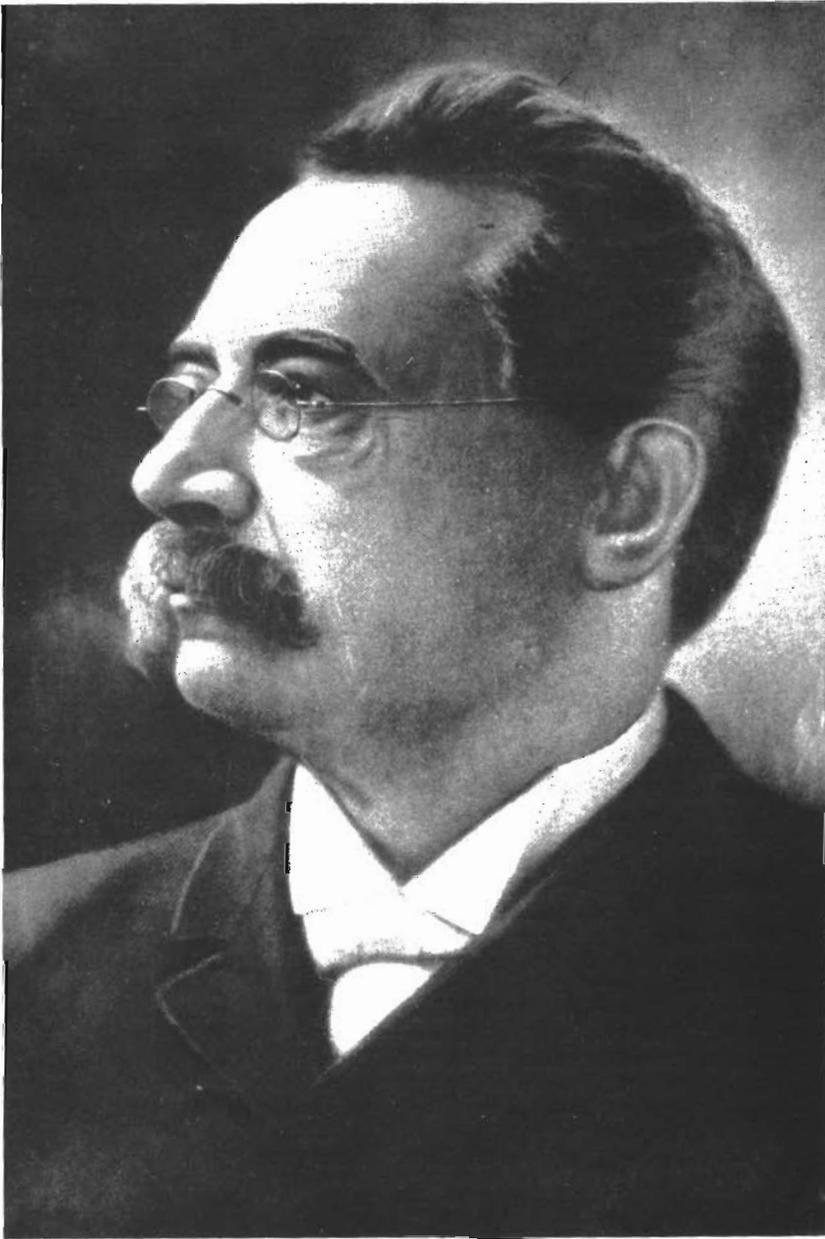
<sup>42</sup>*Jewish Encyclopedia*, New York, 1905, IX, p. 38.

<sup>43</sup>Samuel Kalisch (ed.) *Studies in Ancient and Modern Judaism. . . . Selected Writings of Rabbi Isidor Kalisch*, New York, 1928, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup>*UJE*, V, p. 404; Adolph Guttmacher, *History of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation*, Baltimore, 1905, p. 67.

<sup>45</sup>Marvin Lowenthal, *Henrietta Szold, Life and Letters*, New York, 1942, p. 2; Isidor Blum, *The Jews of Baltimore*, Baltimore, 1910, p. 15.

<sup>46</sup>*Rev. Dr. Adolph Huebsch, Late Rabbi of the Ahawath Chesed Congregation, New York, A Memorial*, New York, 1885, p. IV.



*Courtesy of Edward E. Gruid, Editor of The National Jewish Monthly*

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rabbinate before 1848, but left their pulpits to participate in the Revolutions, Kalisch as a journalist and Hochheimer as a soldier; Szold and Huebsch were students who, like thousands of others, dropped their books to join the hosts of Kossuth. All four became leaders among their colleagues in America. Kalisch was a partner with Isaac Mayer Wise in the summoning of the first American rabbinical conference at Cleveland, in 1855, and a co-author of the first American Reform prayerbook, the *Minhag America*. Each of the other three, by coincidence, also participated in the issuance of versions of the prayerbook. Szold and Hochheimer were collaborators in the editing of the only nineteenth century revision of the ritual which is still in use today, *Abodath Yisrael*, and Huebsch edited and published a special prayerbook for his New York congregation (1872). It is perhaps important to note that none of these four rabbis was an extreme radical theologically. All of them became moderate Reformers in America. Even in Europe their political views were more radical than their religious concepts, and no one of them appears to have taken an active political role in the United States. They were not political radicals because their personalities made them such, but because conditions in Europe had demanded it. America satisfied them; there was no need to be radical.

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These, then, were the twenty-eight Jewish "Forty-Eighters" whom we have been able to identify.<sup>47</sup> Even if double their number came to

<sup>47</sup>Two more "Forty-Eighters" should, perhaps, be added, men who came to America as refugees from Europe but returned to their homes across the sea as soon as political conditions permitted: Rabbi Wolf Schlessinger and Fülöp Korn.

Schlessinger, co-author of a translation of Joseph Albo's *Sefer Ikkharim* (Frankfurt a. M. 1844), had been rabbi in Sulzbach, Bavaria, since 1842. He was arrested for preaching and speaking in behalf of the Revolution, but managed to escape to New York, where he preached and wrote until September, 1850, when he decided to return to Sulzbach. He was accorded a hearty welcome by American Jewry, in the twin role of political hero and Jewish scholar. The *Occident*, in addition to publishing news about him, printed his four-part article on "The Difference between Judaism and Christianity, Being a Refutation of the Pamphlet of the Rev. M. R. Miller, Entitled the 'Identity of Judaism and Christianity,'" as well as "A Few Remarks on Dr. Wise's Ideas on the Tetragrammaton." Data on Schlessinger are to be found in *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, VII, No. 9, pp. 473-4, December 1849; No. 10, p. 513, January 1850; No. 11, pp. 529-42, February 1850; VIII, No. 1, pp. 29-30, April 1850; No. 6, pp. 297-306, 315-6, September 1850; No. 7, pp. 348-54, October 1850; No. 9, pp. 459-64, December 1850; No. 10, pp. 514-9, January 1851; *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, XIII (1849), p. 524; XIV (1850), p. 607; XXII (1858), p. 474.

Korn, a Pressburg book-seller who held the rank of captain in the revolutionary army, came to America by way of Turkey and England, and attempted to arouse support for the Kossuth cause. He remained here until 1863, when he returned to Hungary. Eventually he was converted to Christianity. *UJE*, VI, p. 455.

America, and were lost in obscurity, our conclusions would not have to undergo radical revision. The very fact that so small a number has survived in the documents and periodicals upon which we have based our study is an indication that the Jewish "Forty-Eighters" had no concerted, significant influence upon the life of the American-Jewish community or the German-American community. Never a homogeneous group — most of them not even acquainted with one another — scattered throughout the far reaches of the country — what influence could they have as a group?

Their personal, individual achievements and influence, on the other hand, were extremely important, for they were an exceptional group of men. They brought techniques and education, talents and ambitions, which served America in good stead. Some, like Jacobi and Bien, made contributions to America which will remain for generations to come. Others, like the rabbis and journalists, spent their talents in the service of their immediate generation. Still others contributed the talents and achievements of their children and grandchildren: Rabbi Szold's daughter, Henrietta, founded the women's Zionist organization, Hadassah; Blumenfeld's son, Ralph, became the editor of the London *Express*; Rabbi Huebsch's son, Benjamin, heads the publishing firm, Viking Press; Goldmark's daughters were the help-meets of two of America's leading spirits, Brandeis and Felix Adler. Perhaps the exceedingly high level of their personal and familial achievement can be explained only in psychological terms: in Europe they had the vigor and fearlessness to join the fight against autocracy; in America their strength and creativity, their broad humanity and their faith in progress, found expression in terms other than revolt and battle. The Revolutions of 1848 had, as it were, chosen them from the masses as men of promise. That promise was fulfilled in America.

It is undoubtedly true that there was a larger proportion of intellectuals and men in the professions among the "Forty-Eighters" than among their compatriots who came to America in other years. Nevertheless, the "Forty-Eighters" were not different in the quality of their living and in the nature of their aspirations from the thousands of other German Jews who flocked to America during that age. The talents, imagination, and vigor which the "Forty-Eighters" brought to the United States were matched by the talents, imagination, and vigor of other German Jews who came in that period, and whose names have become part of the legend of America: August Belmont, banker and art connoisseur; Simon Bamberger, mine owner, railroad builder, first non-Mormon governor of Utah; Morris Flexner, Louisville merchant and father of Abraham and Simon; Adam Gimbel, peddler, merchant, and founder of a department store dynasty; Meyer Guggenheim, merchant and mining magnate; Albert Michelson, physicist and Nobel

Prize Winner; Adolph Lewisohn, copper mine magnate and philanthropist; the elder Henry Morgenthau, lawyer, financier and diplomat; Samuel Rosenwald, merchant and father of that Julius who established a great humanitarian foundation; the Seligman brothers, seven strong, who established a great name in commerce, banking, civic leadership and philanthropy. . . .

The American Jewish population grew from about 15,000 in 1825 to about a quarter of a million in 1875. All of those immigrants, like the "Forty-Eighters," came to America in search of personal opportunity, political justice, and economic freedom — here they struck their roots, found the country and its life to be good — and they, in turn, enriched America and enhanced its life with the fruit of labors which Europe had been too bigoted to accept.