

Rejoinder of Morris U. Schappes to Ellis Rivkin

In what is called "A Review Article" of my book, *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States, 1654-1875*, Ellis Rivkin does not quarrel so much with my selection of documents or with my scholarly research as with my "view of history." In fact, he concludes his article by observing that "the serious student of American Jewish history must be grateful" to me, as "the documents are of great value, and the detailed notes give evidence of prodigious labor and technical skill."

As to my "view of history," Dr. Rivkin objects that I evaluate issues of the past at all, that I evaluate them in "the light of their significance for human progress," and that I hope my work as a historian will "aid the Jews in their struggle for liberty and equality" (p. 88). Dr. Rivkin, in fact, charges me with succeeding in this aim, for he affirms that "there can be little doubt that the average reader will come away from the volume feeling not only like a proud, democratic American, but also anxious to contribute to American democratic ideals as a progressive Jew" (p. 89).

That I have dared to do, and succeeded in doing, this Dr. Rivkin attributes to what he calls my "Communist bias." He documents this "bias" of mine "in winning over Jews to the side of progress" by going out of his way to quote an article of mine in *Jewish Life*, and several articles written by others. Dr. Rivkin states that this magazine is an "official Communist publication." As one who has served on the Editorial Board of *Jewish Life* since its inception in 1946, I can state flatly that this periodical has not been and is not now an "official Communist publication."

Furthermore, Dr. Rivkin implies that it is somehow wicked to work in two different media (historiography and magazine editing and writing) to win Jews over to what he is pleased to describe as "such abstractions as democracy, progress, and liberty" (p. 89). My wickedness seems, according to Dr. Rivkin, to lie in the fact that my "emphasis on [such] abstractions . . . coincided with the Communist Party line" and helps prove "what the book really is, namely, an effort to win Jews over to the policies of the American Communist Party," which include support of the Progressive Party (p. 98). Is Dr. Rivkin implying that Jews dare not do anything or believe or think anything that is also done, believed, or thought by the Communist Party? If not, why all the warnings by Dr. Rivkin against these dangerous "abstractions"? There is a current name for this approach, and it is McCarthyism. A recent prime public instance of

it was in Senator Pat McCarran's denunciation of President Truman's veto of the Walter-McCarran Immigration Bill, on the ground that the veto message was following the line of the *Daily Worker* (he might have added, of *Jewish Life*) and therefore that the veto had to be overridden.

Dr. Rivkin sneers at what he describes as "the homiletical and inspirational motif" which he finds in my book. As a characteristic example he cites (p. 91) this sentence of mine introducing the petition by Jonas Phillips to the Constitutional Convention of 1787: "This petition is a vigorous and lofty expression of the Jews' interest in democracy and equality of religious expression." Well, is it not vigorous, is it not lofty? Or do not the Jews have an interest in democracy and equality of religious expression? And if it is vigorous and lofty, and if the Jews have such an interest, why should not a historian, while he is doing many other things, point this out?

Donning the mantle of "the critical historian" who "must raise his voice" against such a sentence as the one analyzed, Dr. Rivkin sternly admonishes, "sermonizing is no substitute for clear analysis" (p. 92). But let us examine Dr. Rivkin's evidence, and see whether I have in fact attempted to substitute sermonizing for analysis.

First, Dr. Rivkin chooses to attack two sentences of mine on the loyalists in the American Revolution: "The loyalists were generally found among the rich merchants and landowners who put the class benefits they expected to derive from the continued connection with Britain above the national interests of the new state. While motivations involved factors such as abstract concepts of loyalty and personal and cultural ties with English life, the decisive factors lay deeper in the class relations, including especially fear of the democratic masses."

"Now," objects Dr. Rivkin, "even a beginning student in American history knows that rich merchants participated in the revolutionary struggle against England because she stifled their trade." True, and it may even be that Dr. Rivkin learned that fact from Document 30 in my book, with my introduction and notes to it on pages 38-39 and 574; the Document is entitled "Merchants Resist Britain," and consists of the Philadelphia Non-Importation Agreement of 1765. Other material on the role of merchants on the side of the Revolution can be found, for instance, on my pages 55, 61, and 581.

Dr. Rivkin goes on with another objection: "It is also common knowledge that large planters fought against England because British policies adversely affected their interests." True again, and again I must point out that my book reflects that fact: Document 34, "Death of a Patriot," is concerned with a plantation owner, Francis Salvador. Moreover, on the very page (50) from which Dr. Rivkin culls the two

sentences with which he quarrels, I refer to the fact that the British were "confiscating whig [i. e. supporters of the Revolution] estates." So it is arrogant, or silly, or indicates a failure carefully to read my book, to try to upbraid me for a lack of what is "common knowledge."

But Dr. Rivkin has still another objection: "It is equally well-known that the upper classes who supported the American revolution had no great love for the democratic masses." Yes, and again I must add that this is adequately reflected in my documents and materials bearing upon the conflict between the Federalists and the Jeffersonians. Those elements of the "upper classes," however, who, despite their "no great love for the democratic masses," *allied* themselves with these democratic masses, did further the cause of the Revolution; they did advance not only their own class interests but the class interests of the democratic masses. Expecting to come out on top, the wealthy merchants and planters on the side of the Revolution maneuvered so as to be in the most favorable position *after* the Revolution to establish their political dominance over the people. When, therefore, Dr. Rivkin proudly concludes his objection with the statement, "Yet Mr. Schappes would condemn the Tories for their selfishness, and hail the patriots for their altruistic motives," I must remark that "selfishness" and "altruistic motives" are Dr. Rivkin's words, not mine.

Therefore, I reaffirm that the two sentences of mine which Dr. Rivkin attacks are historically sound and accurate, and are known to be such by American historians, namely, the class composition of the loyalists consisted generally of those rich merchants and landowners who placed class interest above the new national interests. It is significant that in his attempt at refutation of this statement Dr. Rivkin did not try to define in his own way the class composition of the loyalists. Had he tried to do so, he might have been led to agree to what is commonly accepted.

Seriatim, Dr. Rivkin turns to a second instance of how allegedly I substitute sermonizing for analysis: my comments on the Whigs and the Whig party. Dr. Rivkin mocks: "Thus we discover that on pp. 181-82 the Whigs are against progress, on page 264 they are for progress since they opposed the Mexican War, and finally, on pp. 349-50, they are the 'upper-class Whig party, which was born in the struggle against Jacksonian democracy,' and from which two Jews seceded with thousands of others 'to build a third party to save the nation and democracy from the aggressive slave power'" (p. 94). Blurring the fact that on these three different pages I was dealing with Whigs of three different periods, 1830, 1846, and 1856, Dr. Rivkin pokes fun at what he would have the reader believe is *my* inconsistency.

But the "inconsistency" is rather that of the Whigs themselves.

Now parties *change* in history. History is a record of *change*. It is common knowledge that the Whig party was not the same in 1830, in 1846, and in 1856. The class composition of the dominant elements in the party had changed. In 1830, it was the mercantile and moneyed interests that were in control. By 1846, an influx of Western farmers challenging this control produced a division. In the ensuing years, the Western farmers were joined by industrialists, and the division was deepened into a split between the mercantile and moneyed interests on the one hand, and the other classes. During and after 1854, the industrial and farming elements in the Whig party helped to found and build the Republican party. Now, in my book I was not writing a cursive disquisition on the history of the Whig party. I was using the well-known facts about the party to "help to provide the objective setting" for the understanding of three documents, 78, 95, and 116, of three different periods (this being the purpose of my introductions, despite what Dr. Rivkin says to the contrary). For this purpose, I did not think it necessary to *explain* the changes of position of the Whigs during these years. Now Dr. Rivkin climaxes his indictment of my scattered comments on the Whigs with this triumphant paradox, meant to expose my inconsistency: "It would seem, then, that thousands of conservative members of the upper class became democrats when they left the moribund Whig Party to join the Republican Party of progress and democracy." Well, it happens to be a well-known historical fact that, to fight the expansion of slavery, conservative Whigs joined the Republican Party and therefore did contribute to a process which ended in the expansion of democracy by the abolition of chattel slavery. Progress is to be judged *concretely*; as objective relations change, political parties and positions will change. Twenty years after 1856 the Republican Party had changed considerably. It is only Dr. Rivkin's bland disregard of such historical processes that compels me to state so elementary a point.

The same charge, with the same demonstrable result, is brought by Dr. Rivkin against what he calls "the strictly arbitrary nature of [my] method" as revealed presumably in "the odyssey of Mr. August Belmont from reaction to progress. In one of Mr. Schappes' introductions, Mr. Belmont is a reactionary war-monger [this phrase is Dr. Rivkin's, not mine—M. U. S.], since he 'helped finance the war of aggression against Mexico,' favored the annexation of Cuba and expansion into Latin America, and opposed the abolitionists and supported Douglas. Nevertheless, in the same introduction, he does yeoman's service in Europe for the progressive Lincoln administration during the Civil War" (pp. 94-95).

From the very paragraph from which he quotes (my p. 452), Dr.

Rivkin strangely omits both an important fact and my explanation of why Belmont supported Lincoln in 1861. The fact is that Belmont had "advocated allowing the Confederacy to secede." The explanatory concluding sentence of my paragraph is: "Belmont's efforts *at this early period* of the war in behalf of the Lincoln administration therefore reflect the pressure of the tremendous and unified mass support that rallied to Lincoln at the firing on Fort Sumter." Unfortunately, Dr. Rivkin seems unaware of the well-known fact that Belmont's "odyssey" was even more complicated than I indicate on p. 452. For on p. 695, note 18, I report the fact that by 1863 Belmont had become a leader of the Copperhead movement opposing the Lincoln administration and favoring "appeasement of the slaveholders." Now, as a historian, I am compelled, when the documents require it, to record such tergiversations even if they confuse Dr. Rivkin, who seems to want of history that it be much more simple than it is.

Dr. Rivkin's strange failure to allow for the process of change in history can provoke only hilarity (perhaps compounded with commiseration) when he exclaims against my "arbitrary" method: "So, too, we are informed, on p. 112, that Tammany is very progressive, but on p. 631 it is already corrupt" (p. 95). If Dr. Rivkin finds it difficult to believe that the Tammany Society in 1808 (my p. 112) was in fact progressive, and Tammany Hall in 1845 (my p. 631) was in fact corrupt, let him consult my cited sources for the copious evidence. Tammany, like the Whigs, had changed.

To present another example of what he regards as "the sort of difficulties that Mr. Schappes makes for himself" by "the strictly arbitrary nature of his method," Dr. Rivkin resorts to distortion. He writes scornfully: "The Nativist movement is reactionary, and yet it advocates clean civic government, and even supports the Jews in the Mortara case" (p. 95). That Nativism, which I defined (p. 252) as "a movement directed against immigration and the foreign-born," is reactionary, I have not hitherto seen questioned except by a nativist. But it is in setting up his antithesis ("yet") that Dr. Rivkin distorts what I wrote, as can be seen from reading my statement: "In New York City, Native Americanism was *temporarily allied* with civic reform and good government forces hostile to Tammany corruption . . ." (p. 631). Similarly, with regard to the Mortara case, my own statement has a quite different import from Dr. Rivkin's. I wrote: "In certain instances, the American nativist Know-Nothing movement, with its rabid anti-alien and anti-Catholic propaganda, seized upon the issue in its own unprincipled way, and the American Jews and Protestants interested in religious liberty found themselves in unwholesome company" (p. 386). Now such temporary alliances and unprincipled ways on the part of a reactionary movement are well-

known in American political history. What would Dr. Rivkin have had me do? Arbitrarily omit these facts in order to simplify the picture? Or arbitrarily refuse to evaluate Nativism as reactionary?

But Dr. Rivkin has another, and equally unsound, instance of my alleged arbitrariness: "So, too, it is difficult to know what one is to do about Mr. Mann, the American ambassador to Switzerland during the negotiation of the Swiss treaty. 'Now Mann,' Schappes informs us, 'was a "convinced democrat [who] viewed the rise and sweep of the revolutionary movement [in Europe] with unbounded enthusiasm.'" His democratic views notwithstanding, we learn from Mr. Schappes himself that Mr. Mann was an advocate of states' rights, a secessionist, and a Confederate special agent in Europe" (p. 95).

Here Dr. Rivkin has effected a distortion by reversing the order of my statements and by cutting out one-half of one sentence so that my ironic implication is eliminated. I had written (p. 316) that Mann "was a Virginian advocate of states' rights, and later a secessionist and Confederate special agent in Europe; when the Confederacy was defeated, Mann did not return to the United States, and he died in Paris. Now Mann was 'a convinced democrat [who] viewed the rise and sweep of the revolutionary movement [in Europe] with unbounded enthusiasm,' and he was eager to negotiate this treaty because he feared the Tsar and his counter-revolutionary allies would dominate the Swiss." The irony implicit in the sequence of my statements and in my quotation from a standard work about the "convinced democrat" might not have escaped Dr. Rivkin had he known what is commonly known, that many a Southern Democrat was for revolution abroad and for slavery at home. The reason for this interest in revolution abroad is a point I document with *original archival material*, presented on the very same page 316 from which Dr. Rivkin quoted, to-wit: that Southern plantation owners hoped to get from new revolutionary governments low tariffs on their exports of cotton, tobacco, rice, etc. Thus, while I am in the very act of carefully unravelling an apparent contradiction, Dr. Rivkin, because he either did not understand what I was writing or because he was so intent on finding me "arbitrary," accuses me of being guilty of an inconsistency!

However, Dr. Rivkin reaches an extreme of misrepresentation when, denouncing my treatment of the Civil War, he sums it up thus: "He insists upon viewing the struggle as a moral crusade to abolish slavery" (p. 94). On the contrary, I explicitly reject what Dr. Rivkin calls the "moralistic approach." Thus, in presenting and discussing the controversy about the Biblical view of slavery, I deliberately entitled the opposing positions "The Slaveholders' Bible" and "Abolitionists' Bible" in order to underscore that the Bible, and morality, were not fundamental causes in the struggle. Moreover, on p. 406,

introducing the battle of Biblical quotations and interpretations, I stated: "The issue was settled not in the pulpits but in economic, political and military arenas. But even as an ideological debate the method was fruitless. Both sides ignored the historical method, which would have shown that slavery in antiquity was not restricted to the Jews and developed from economic and social conditions and class relations before the treatment of slaves was codified in law secular or 'divine,' and that in the history of class oppression slavery in antiquity marked a step forward in the organization of the labor process and therefore in the development of civilization." Likewise, in my introduction to Document 129, "Standing by the Union," I define the goal of the war as "the defeat of slavery and the advance of industrial capitalism" (p. 437). A system of industrial capitalism, based upon free rather than slave labor, also meant an expansion of democracy. That such a system is on a higher moral plane than a slave system surely need not now be argued. There is a history to morality as well as to other phases of human life, and a historian can note that history without being open to the charge that he is substituting sermonizing for analysis.

As for Dr. Rivkin's point that I do not say that the Republican Party represented industrialists, I shall not quibble that this is implied in my description of the war as advancing "industrial capitalism." Had my attention been directed earlier to the fact that I have no explicit statement summarizing the class composition of the Republican Party of that period, I should have been glad to add such a description in my second edition. The same is true for the well-known fact that Lincoln was not an abolitionist, which I had no occasion to record in my book since at no time did I find it necessary to stop for a rounded-out evaluation of Lincoln — yet I could have added that fact at any time that its absence was noted as possibly confusing, *without in any way modifying my methodology*. When a third edition is published I shall try to make these additions. But with or without these sentences, it is preposterous to describe my approach simply as "moralizing" or "sermonizing."

Dr. Rivkin would have the reader believe that it is only "in dealing with the South" that I "take pains to show the economic alignments" (p. 94). Yet he contradicts himself in his own Note 14, p. 99, when he refers to my statements about why Maryland and Missouri remained loyal to the Union. About Maryland I wrote (p. 691, Note 5): "Union sentiment, which prevailed, was based on the dependence of manufacturing and merchant interests on raw materials from the Northwest, on fear that the three railroads crossing Baltimore would be ruined by secession, on the fear that the slaves would escape across the State border to the North, on the belief that the Confederacy,

if successful, would revive the slave-trade, which would ruin the Maryland slave markets, on the fear of civil war right within Maryland, and on the moral judgment of some abolitionist spokesmen who denounced the evils of slavery (Carl M. Frasure, 'Union Sentiment in Maryland, 1859-1861,' *The Maryland Historical Magazine*, XXIV, 1929, pp. 214-221; . . .).

About Missouri I wrote (p. 476, p. 704, Note 2): "This pro-Union course was determined basically by the recent development of railroad connections between Missouri and the eastern markets, which made it less dependent upon Missouri and Mississippi River trade with the southern states, and which stimulated the commercial and manufacturing middle classes to grasp the value of Union with the East." The cited sources are Virgil C. Blum, "The Political and Military Activities of the German Element in St. Louis, 1859-1861," *Missouri Historical Review*, XLII, 1948, p. 106; Robert J. Rombauer, *The Union Cause in St. Louis in 1861*, St. Louis, 1909, pp. 135-290.

I cite the sources for both passages merely to show that there is well-known foundation for my judgments. But to Dr. Rivkin all this, and much more in the book, is merely a substitution of sermonizing for analysis!

With reference to the documents bearing upon anti-Semitism, and to my scant page of comment on anti-Semitism in my brief general introduction, Dr. Rivkin waxes wroth. He can not deny my assertion that my documents "reveal for the first time that anti-Semitism in our country has a more ancient history, a more persistent continuity, and a wider dispersion than even liberal opponents of anti-Semitism have hitherto dreamed." He ignores my express invitation to all readers to analyze "the anti-Semita displayed in this volume." Instead, he tilts a dazzling lance at a straw-man of his own creation.

Now, I had pointed "to this as a fundamental, irreducible cause: in any society so class-structured that a minority economically exploits, politically dominates, and culturally controls the majority, the usefulness of anti-Semitism in all its forms and verbalizations is assured and endless because it helps keep that minority in power." Dr. Rivkin pontificates that "such a general formula, unfortunately, does not take the place of an analysis" (p. 95). But it was offered as a guiding conclusion, not as an analysis, which I obviously could not undertake in the limits of less than one page that I could devote to this theme in my overall introduction. Yet some comments are in order on Dr. Rivkin's "refutation" of my "formula."

I did not say, nor do I believe, that anti-Semitism is, as Dr. Rivkin would have me say, "confined to the reactionaries." I regard anti-Semitism as an impediment to social progress. It is used by minority ruling classes to divert the attention of discontented majorities, or

sections of them, from the responsibility of those ruling classes themselves for the evils afflicting the majorities. Now reactionary ruling classes will infect even persons or groups otherwise and generally progressive with anti-Semitic misinterpretations of reality. But such progressives as have reflected or expressed anti-Semitic ideas were thereby defining a limitation on their own progressiveness, were thereby indicating a weakness in their own interpretation of reality.

Of course there is, as Dr. Rivkin notes, a qualitative difference between the anti-Semitism used by ruling circles in an expanding economy and social system, and the anti-Semitism used in a social system that is in permanent crisis. If in my scant page I did not advert to this difference it was only because in the period up to 1875, the period covered by my first volume, the United States was throughout an expanding economy and social system. The distinction will emerge clearly in my forthcoming second volume, dealing with the period *after* 1875, when crisis does set in.

Dr. Rivkin demonstrably misrepresents my position on anti-Semitism as manifested during the Civil War when he writes: "it is little consolation to know that, since the soldiers of the North were fighting a just cause (p. 465), *they were to overlook* the anti-Semitic manifestations in the Union forces" (p. 96; my italics, M. U. S.). Not only did not I, nor the Union soldiers, "overlook" this anti-Semitism, but I called attention to it, and on page 465 my introduction to Document 137 ends with this sentence: "*That there was* anti-Semitism in the [Union] army was not due to the just cause for which the men were fighting, but to the social system which put a premium on competition in a frame-work of scarcity, and thus bred antagonism." Furthermore, with regard to Grant's Order No. 11, I wrote on pp. 472-73: "that portion of the Jewish press that was not fully supporting the war [on the Union side] and that in fact had copperhead leanings sought to magnify the issue. . . . Those Jews who supported the war, however, rejoiced that this official act of injustice against the Jews had been so speedily and decisively corrected." My documentation fully bears out these conclusions.

Dr. Rivkin is being quite unhistorical when he declares, "neither side [in the Civil War] offered the Jews, as Jews, either more or less than the other." It is true that the issue in the war was not, and could not be, anti-Semitism; the issue was abolition of chattel slavery and the establishment of industrial capitalism as the dominant economic system throughout the country. But certainly the Jews had a stake in that establishment, and in the accompanying expansion of democracy, which created more favorable conditions for all immigrant national groups, including the Jews, and which incidentally created conditions for the absorption of immigrant masses that a slave system

could not have attracted or accepted. Does that mean that capitalism would abolish anti-Semitism? No, it would inevitably breed anti-Semitism; anti-Semitism could be abolished only in a system that would develop out of the contradictions of capitalism. But in the specific and limited historic choice in 1861 between a slave system and an industrial capitalism, the Jews' interests, like the interests of the people as a whole, lay in progressing to industrial capitalism, from which would open a new road that could lead directly to the abolition of anti-Semitism. This abolition could be accomplished by the establishment of a system in which there would be no minority ruling class economically exploiting and politically and culturally oppressing the majority of the population. Socialism I believe to be such a system. *All* previous social systems, between the age of primitive communalism and modern scientific socialism, have been systems in which minority ruling classes dominated majorities and had to resort to diversions and scapegoat techniques, of which anti-Semitism was one. Therefore Dr. Rivkin's remark that anti-Semitism has appeared in such diverse systems as "in ancient Alexandria, in Mohammedan Spain, in feudal Europe," does not constitute an invalidation of my theory.

As for Dr. Rivkin's fashionable comment about anti-Semitism in "Stalin's Russia," in the absence of adequate room to discuss this allegation, I must content myself with an essentially sound statement by Professor Salo W. Baron and a brief personal comment. In *The Bulletin* of the West New York Jewish Community Center of Shaare Zedek Synagogue, February, 1951, the following appeared:

Question: Why did Russia pass a law forbidding anti-Semitism? Weren't the Russian Jews persecuted in the past and is it possible that the Russian regime became Jew-loving under Stalin?

Answer: According to Professor Salo W. Baron, to whom this question was posed, the reason may be attributed to the following: communism aims to eliminate class struggle and, if you do that, you will eliminate the need for a scapegoat and anti-Semitism, its resultant offshoot. In 1918, Lenin outlawed anti-Semitism because it was an instrument of the governing classes. Since anti-Semitism is a factor in the class struggle—one class being set against another—it was against the best interests of the communist program to retain it. Anti-Semitism thus was not outlawed necessarily because of a love for the Jews, but because it would violate a principle of the communist theory."

I would add that no reliable *evidence* has been published showing that the Soviet ruling classes (workers, collective farmers, and intellectuals) have had to resort to anti-Semitism in order to divert the

wrath of former capitalists, landlords, the nobility and, recently, Project X agents from our country. All the *evidence* proves the contrary: that the Soviet ruling classes and their government have vigorously and successfully fought the anti-Semitic hangover left by Tsarism, and the Hitlerite transient resuscitation of it during the Nazi occupation of parts of the Soviet Union.

Dr. Rivkin, then, has set up a straw-man and has had a hollow and petty triumph knocking down his creation. But neither he nor anyone else has been able to get away from the fact that the documents in my book demonstrated that anti-Semitism *here* has "a more ancient history, a more persistent continuity, and a wider dispersion than even liberal opponents of anti-Semitism have hitherto dreamed." Those who want to fight anti-Semitism, rather than to apologize for present-day monopoly capitalism, have expressed their gratitude for my evidence.

Dr. Rivkin has still another charge (p. 97) in his indictment, that I err when I state that the impulse to Reform Judaism "came from the needs of the rising Jewish middle class." But Dr. Rivkin does not venture to say from the needs of *what* class the impulse to Reform did come. Was it the working class? The upper class? At best, Dr. Rivkin seems to say that not the entire Jewish middle class took the path to reform, but only a part of it. Then Dr. Rivkin mounts his highest horse for his most piercing thrust: "It would seem that Schappes should have been a little more respectful of his reader's intelligence in view of the fact that he himself, in an introduction to one document, hails Isaac Harby as a Jeffersonian republican (p. 135), the same Isaac Harby who, later, appears as the leader of an upper-class Reform movement!" How crudely Dr. Rivkin has to pervert or even to falsify to make this "point": he switches my "middle-class" into "upper-class"! The fact is simply that Harby, for whom my respect is apparent, was a middle-class intellectual who, like many others of the middle-class, was a Jeffersonian republican; he was also a leader of a middle-class Reform movement; *both* of these facts are noted by me on the page 135 that Dr. Rivkin cites. The higher the horse, the bigger the fall, Dr. Rivkin.

In conclusion, permit me one more observation: Dr. Rivkin's lengthy article was not a "review" of my book. No one wading through his article would emerge with the minimum information which a reader of a review, particularly in the *American Jewish Archives*, is entitled to expect. Dr. Rivkin failed to describe the varied contents of the book, the many *new documents* and many *new facts*, as well as interpretations, brought to bear upon them. The assessment of these matters one might well have expected to find in a review in these pages. Unfortunately, the reader will now have to

seek elsewhere for it, or make his own assessment by reading the book itself.

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The Answer of Ellis Rivkin

When I wrote my critique of Mr. Schappes' historiography in his *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States*, I hardly expected it to meet with Mr. Schappes' approval, and, consequently, his irritated rejoinder comes as no surprise. For those readers who may be inclined to accept Mr. Schappes' assurance that *Jewish Life* is not an official publication of the Communist Party, I need merely point out that it is rather difficult to find a more appropriate designation for a magazine which proclaims from its masthead that it is published by the Morning Freiheit Association (*The Morning Freiheit* is the Yiddish counterpart of the *Daily Worker*)!

As for the rest of Mr. Schappes' transparently diversionary rejoinder, I feel that the most effective and thoroughgoing rebuttal is to be found in my original analysis. I suggest that the interested reader examine Mr. Schappes' volume in the light of my critique and let him judge for himself whether or not it contains an accurate evaluation of Mr. Schappes' method and purpose. The critical historian, interested in truth, irrespective of party commitments, can only be repelled by Mr. Schappes' homiletical, biased, and distorted exegesis. It will indeed be interesting to see how quickly the democratic heroes of Mr. Schappes' present volume will become reactionary villains when the Communist Party requires a far different tool from the one which Mr. Schappes so adroitly fashioned in *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States*.

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