

## Reviews of Books

THE BETH EL STORY — WITH A HISTORY OF THE  
JEWS IN MICHIGAN BEFORE 1850. By Irving I. Katz.  
*Detroit: Wayne University Press. 1955. xvii, 238 pp.*

Those who have already benefited at first hand from the executive skill and the historical proficiency of Irving I. Katz are not surprised to discover that his story of Beth El Temple, of Detroit, the oldest congregation in the state of Michigan, is the model *par excellence* for all future chronicles of American synagogues. He has distilled the essence of Beth El's achievements and reasons for renown for 104 years, and has embroidered this account with illustrations which make of every page a vital document. The ebb and flow of the changing trends in Liberal Judaism are here reflected, and at all times we find this pioneer congregation fulfilling its historic role as a leader on the national scene as well as a pace-setter for the Jewry of Michigan. The text is simple and unpretentious, for the facts speak with a greater eloquence than even the pen of Irving I. Katz can muster.

The volume is fittingly placed in the frame of reference of American Jewish history, for certainly no congregation is an island unto itself. It is appropriate that Dr. Jacob R. Marcus, to whom Katz pays the highest and most deserved tribute as his mentor, should paint the setting in his own inimitable manner, tracing the origins and growth of the American Jewish community and concluding with a peroration which could well grace any pulpit in the country. The complete account of the settlement of Jews in Michigan before 1850 provides an excellent background to the moving narrative of Beth El, and here Katz rises to his full stature as a historian. Not only did the slowly perishing Warsaw Ghetto require its Noach Levinson; even the teeming metropolis and the thriving smaller communities of the state of Michigan would have become silent symbols of Jewish historical continuity if Irving I. Katz had not assumed the self-imposed task of collecting data and pictorial information. There is not a single congregation in our state that has not called upon his prodigious labor and resourcefulness to document its place in Jewish history. Our own congrega-

tion, Temple Emanuel, of Grand Rapids, the second oldest Reform group in the state, is much beholden to him, for with his help we suddenly discovered one day that in 1957 we would be celebrating our centennial, about fourteen years earlier than we had intended.

From Rabbi Richard C. Hertz's introductory preview of the historical kaleidoscope to an appendix chockful with illustrations of original documents, programs, newspaper accounts, up to and including an index of names and a list of illustrations, the book breathes a professional air as well as the aesthete's love. The typography of the volume is remarkably excellent: the print is clear, the pictures are without blemish, everything is set with good taste and with grace and charm. When one recalls the dull and tedious congregational histories which have crossed our desk, with their dwelling on petty details and their lack of historical perspective, and with their sloppy physical appearance, one heaves a sigh of relief that at last a prototype has appeared. A new level in congregational historiography has been reached, and it will never be quite the same again.

It has not been possible, in this brief review, to dwell at length on many items of interest and intriguing details. The entire book must be swallowed at one gulp to be fully appreciated. It but remains to be recorded that for many years a busy executive has been painstakingly accumulating, bit by bit, unheralded and unsung, the small stones which have fashioned this mosaic. This in itself is unprecedented. But that a congregation should invest so much energy and money in immortalizing a work of art is even more astounding. It indicates that the story of Beth El was well worth the effort involved.

*Grand Rapids, Mich.*

HARRY ESSRIG

FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY. By Charles M. Segal. *New York: Twayne Publishers. 1955. 159 pp. \$2.75*

In the preface to his *Fascinating Facts about American Jewish History*, Charles M. Segal states that he prepared this book primarily for two reasons. First, he anticipated the many questions that would be asked during the tercentenary year about American Jewish life, and second, he hoped to stimulate an interest in American Jewish

history. These are two commendable reasons for publication at this time, and they may well be imitated by historians and non-professionals alike. Some time during the observance, those intimately connected with the tercentenary were asked many of the questions which Charles M. Segal poses in his "highlights of the fascinating and inspiring saga of American Jews." At the same time, there is a growing interest in American Jewish history. New and popular means in many forms have helped to stimulate that interest, and they are certainly welcomed. If the publication of this book has helped in either situation or in both, then it is an aid and comfort to those deeply interested in the future of American Jewish historiography.

The author did not attempt to prepare a book based on his own scientific research or one encompassing all of American Jewish history. In eighteen chronologically arranged chapters, the titles of which range from the "Discovery of the New World" to "In Our Time," he uses a question-and-answer form; he seeks to answer "instructively and entertainingly" questions pertaining to limited phases of American Jewish life. Four additional chapters deal with the Jewish labor movement, Judaism, and general facts. It would be almost impossible to enumerate the many fields of interest with which the author did not concern himself. Within its limited scope, however, the book has the advantage of presenting the "highlights" in an easy-flowing manner of language, with clarity, and in a form attractive to many readers. The index is excellent.

This book will probably find less acceptance among scholars and those interested in a more traditional approach to the study of American Jewish history. It is not encyclopedic, and it is not a book of source material. Facts were culled from the studies of others; thus the few interpretations become less meaningful. Regrettably, in a book of such small scope there is bound to be an underestimation of historical situations. In question after question and chapter upon chapter, the fascinating story that the author begins to tell is left unfinished. Such half-told answers would never satisfy an inquiring individual or audience in the tercentenary year (1954) or at any time. More important, perhaps, is the fact that oftentimes the author's questions or answers fail to bring out the larger significance of the particular situation. Thus, in the chapter "Westward Ho!" the author fails to ask and answer the truly significant question of why and how Jews migrated westward from the coastal region.

The same underestimation is true, for example, in the handling of the formation of the Zionist movement in America and the Yiddish literary movement. The reader may question seriously the value of publishing a work so limited in scope.

A few of the author's facts are not so fascinating because of error or misunderstanding. The reader finds it difficult to understand how Abraham Goldfaden founded the Yiddish theatre in the United States in 1882 when the great writer came to these shores in 1887 (p. 98). The story of Isaac Leeser (p. 126) is badly mutilated. Leeser, the patriarch of traditional Judaism, served as *hazzan* of Congregation Mikveh Israel, of Philadelphia, from 1829 to 1850, and in 1857 he became *hazzan* of Congregation Beth El-Emeth, also in Philadelphia. The author gives Leeser undeserved credit for thirty-nine years of continuous service at Congregation Mikveh Israel.

The reader is confronted with another misunderstanding in the author's investigation of the American immigration law of 1924 (pp. 101-2). The story, in the main, is taken from the article on "Migrations" in *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* (Vol. VII, p. 550), a publication not mentioned in the attached bibliography. The result of the law, according to the author, was that 80 per cent of the immigrants came from northern and western European countries, while only 20 per cent came from eastern and southern Europe. Where the author obtained these statistics is a complete mystery. A more thorough study of the immigration law and its results would bring a sharp revision of those figures. In the field of Jewish immigration, also, the author fails to call attention to Arnold Wiznitzer's important statement that the twenty-three Jews who came to New Amsterdam in 1654 arrived on the "Sainte Catherine," not the "Saint Charles" (*Publication of the American Jewish Historical Society*, Vol. XLIV, December, 1954, p. 88).\*

Finally, in one case the author fails to answer his own question about the stand taken by President Harry S. Truman, the Congress, and the nation's political parties towards the creation of the new state of Israel (p. 112). The answer would supply a most interesting and significant phase not only of American Jewish life, but also of American foreign policy and domestic politics. Inevitably, typo-

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\*According to the most recent information, the "Sainte Catherine" is the accepted ship on which the twenty-three Jews arrived. It is hoped that future investigation will finally establish whether it was the "Sainte Catherine" or the "Saint Charles."

graphical errors creep into a publication, but the reviewer was able to find only two in a book that is bound simply but in good taste.

Perhaps the publication of this book will stimulate scholars into expanding upon the many "fascinating facts" that are found in American Jewish history.

*Milwaukee, Wis.*

ALFRED D. SUMBERG

**JEWISH ADVENTURES IN AMERICA.** By Elma Ehrlich Levinger. *New York: Bloch Publishing Co.* 1954. 243 pp. \$3.50

As a historical novelist, as a popular biographer, and as an author of textbooks for the Jewish religious school, Elma Ehrlich Levinger has, over a period of years, established a truly enviable reputation. For many years Jewish children have enjoyed her stories with their vivid Jewish historical backgrounds, and have thereby deepened their appreciation of Jewish history. Countless children and young people have participated in her holiday plays or those based upon Jewish ideals.

In the light of this record, therefore, one finds the present book somewhat disappointing, although on its own merits it is probably an adequate enough book. For one thing, the reviewer was hard put to it to decide just what the book purports to be. If it is meant for children or even for young people in high school, then much of its vocabulary is too difficult for the average reading-level of most of the pupils in our schools. Furthermore, the content itself and the manner of its presentation are too prosaic to capture the imagination and interest of most children. On the other hand, for adults there is a suggestion of oversimplification, if not of actual condescension.

Then again, is it meant to be used as a textbook? Or as supplementary reading for a course in American Jewish history? Or for leisure-time reading? If it is supposed to be a textbook, then it has a number of serious defects. For instance, there are no chapter divisions. The book is divided into three large parts: "We Come to America"; "We Grow with America"; "We Pay Our Debt to America." The subheadings within these parts vary greatly in size, scope, and function. There are none of the provocative questions, or suggestions for activities, or references to supplementary readings which we have come to expect in our textbooks. There are no "helps" for teachers. And, as a matter of fact, it is rather difficult

to imagine (or perhaps not so difficult to imagine, but rather horrible to think of!) how the average teacher would use the book in the classroom.

From a scholarly standpoint, the facts in the book are probably accurate enough, though elementary and sketchy. Sometimes, however, the author boldly fictionizes, as, for instance, right at the beginning of the book, when she describes in full detail the scene in the harbor of New Amsterdam, as the "Saint Charles" brings the first twenty-three Jews to these shores. And she tells us precisely what Jacob Barsimson said and thought. At other times she keeps rigidly to the skeletal information which one finds in most of the textbooks on the subject, and which bores our pupils with them all. One must admire the skill with which Mrs. Levinger occasionally weaves source material into her narrative. But one wishes that she had done so much more frequently. And some of the material which she does insert should have been edited more carefully, or perhaps rewritten entirely, for the sake of simplicity and intelligibility. On the other hand, every once in a while, the author slips into an annoying "cuteness," as, for example, when she reports that Judah Monis, teaching Hebrew at Harvard College, opened up a shop where he sold hardware and tobacco, and then she adds that his students probably "preferred his tobacco to his Hebrew."

Incidentally, in view of her repeated insistence that Monis, as a convert to Christianity, should hardly be called a Jew at all, one wonders that she gives so much space to him, to the Pinto Brothers, and to several others. But then one might question the sense of proportion in the book altogether. Thus, "Emperor Norton I" (Joshua Norton of San Francisco) is certainly a colorful character. But one wonders if he deserves more than five pages in a fairly small book which purports to be dealing with serious history. Even more disturbing is the relative amount of space given to the three large parts into which the book is divided. Are we to believe that, from a historical standpoint, the complexities of the life of millions of American Jews in the modern period can be comprehended in fewer pages than the formless beginnings of a few thousand of our co-religionists in the Revolutionary period or even in Civil War days? The book also suffers from the lack of an index.

For that matter, the basic conception of the book, history taught through biographies, is really not one which makes for any proper understanding of historical relationships, movements, and trends —

unless, perhaps, the biographies are far more detailed than any of those in this book. It gives entirely too superficial a view of history. And it also lends itself far too easily to the type of apologetic approach which has characterized most of the books on American Jewish history produced so far, and which is evident throughout this book, as typified by the banal title of the third section: "We Pay Our Debt to America."

If, on the other hand, this book is meant for supplementary reading in a course on American Jewish history, then most of the above strictures still hold. But, more importantly, it does not sufficiently *supplement* any of the existing textbooks; that is to say, it adds little or nothing which they do not already contain.

In the opinion of this reviewer, the book may have some value for an adult or for an intelligent college student who knows nothing at all about the history of the Jews in the United States, but who is curious and would find this a brief and extremely easy introduction.  
*Baltimore, Md.*

SAMUEL GLASNER

**JEWES IN AMERICAN WARS.** By J. George Fredman and Louis A. Falk. *Washington, D. C.: The Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America.* 1954. ix, 276 pp. \$2.50

The aims of the stories recounted in *Jews In American Wars* are to reveal that men of Jewish faith have been neither more nor less heroic than other American soldiers, airmen, sailors, or marines; that they fought as Americans; that they showed themselves to be loyal comrades at guns, brave fighters, proud, free men and patriotic Americans. It estimates that in all conflicts, through the last fighting war in Korea, over 1,000,000 Jews have served their country in arms. The stories are told, and the statistics given, in sequence from the American Revolution through the Korean conflict, to make Jews proudly aware of their contribution to American life and to foster respect and esteem in all Americans for the outstanding contributions which men and women of the Jewish faith have made to the defense and security of the United States. This book is well arranged and written. Its contents can be followed with ease and with interest, so that it can accomplish its aims through its literary structure. The authors plead extenuation for any possible shortcomings of brevity or omission on the ground of limitation of space.

Any suggestions or additions that follow are a matter of taste and personal knowledge.

The Jewish reader, if not others, would probably like to have sources cited, so that he could possibly read more where briefly mentioned events are stated. Four lines are insufficient to include the records of Chaplain Louis Werfel and Chaplain Irving Tepper. All the chaplains who met their death in the armed forces deserve respect. Chaplains Tepper and Werfel were as heroic as were the men who went down with the "Dorchester." Chaplain Tepper was with the Ninth Division, first in North Africa and then in Europe. He was greatly beloved because he constantly moved around in order to bring services to the Jewish men wherever the deployment of the division spread them. His death came shortly after the invasion of southern France. The story which I heard related was that he was killed by a German shell which exploded in his path as he was traveling from one medical aid station to look in on another.

Chaplain Werfel was killed in an airplane crash, as he was pushing to get from one place to another for Chanukah services. His death came in December, 1943. He and I were stationed in Algiers; he was assigned to the Air Force and had made commitments to be with men in Constantine, Algiers, and Oran for the observance of Chanukah. He had gone to Oran first and conducted the services, and was to participate in the services which we arranged at Algiers . . . then fly to Constantine for a service which he had promised the men there. In Oran, weather had cancelled all scheduled MATS flights. In order to meet his engagements, Chaplain Werfel joined a flyer who was pushing through to get to Algiers for Christmas. With limited visibility because of the weather, the plane crashed into a hill shortly after it took off from Oran. A story of the chaplains, however brief, should carry mention of Chaplain Coleman A. Zwitman, who died of an illness which he contracted in the line of duty. When he returned from duty in the Pacific, he underwent an operation, from which an internist discovered that his life expectancy was very short. Coleman A. Zwitman was probably aware of the diagnosis, but in spite of it he carried on a very active ministry until his death in 1950.

A Jewish story should carry an account not only of Jewish physicians, but also of two Jewish hospitals that were organized. The Michael Reese Hospital of Chicago provided the staff for the Twenty-first Evacuation Hospital, and the Mount Sinai Hospital



the staff for the Third General Hospital. The research of Dr. Harry Plotz, of the Mount Sinai staff, who passed away while serving as a member of the staff of the United States Army Medical Center, could be linked with the work of Walter Reed.

In "The Home Front" chapter there should be mention of Harry Diamond, one of the inventors of the radio proximity fuse. In the same chapter there should be a reference to the award of the Presidential Medal of Merit to Frank L. Weil, who served as president of the National Jewish Welfare Board during the World War II years and after, and who was chairman of a committee of laymen appointed by President Truman to make a study of morale and welfare in the armed forces. The work of Harry Cutler in World War I should also be included. Mention should be made of his chairmanship of the Selective Service Board, No. 5, in 1917 and 1918, and of his appointment, in 1917, as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Jewish Welfare Board, which position he held until his death in 1920. In June, 1919, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for "especially meritorious and conspicuous service."

The picture of Governor Herbert H. Lehman, of New York State, and his daughter which appears in the book must have been taken when he first arrived in Algiers on a visit in 1944. When I saw him there, he was in an Army hospital, his leg in traction; he had injured a knee in tripping. Two days later I was told that he had gone out with a bandaged leg, against the advice of doctors; he was determined to make visits in the theatre without delay.

A young man who recently passed away at Fort Ord should be included in future editions as an exemplification of a soldier who in peace died for his country. Joseph Chariton, of Tarzana, Calif., was eighteen when he finished high school. He was not yet required by his community to enter the army, but felt it a sense of duty to volunteer his services. He served for only twenty-one days and died of an illness which had developed in the course of his duty. In those twenty-one days his conscientious devotion to duty won him the admiration and respect of his officers and comrades. Not all the heroes are those who are decorated or who die in time of war. There are many who serve faithfully in time of peace, even giving their lives. The authors, we may assume, omit examples of these because their service is taken for granted as the regular duty of any soldier.

*Monterey, Calif.*

CHAPLAIN HENRY TAVEL

SYNAGOGUE ARCHITECTURE IN THE UNITED STATES—HISTORY AND INTERPRETATION. By Rachel Wischnitzer. *Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America.* 1955. xv, 204 pp. \$6.00

When, as a refugee from Nazi persecution, I came to Cincinnati in 1939, I was often asked to deliver lectures in other cities. Thus I had the opportunity of seeing numerous synagogues. It struck me that none of these buildings was in the contemporary style which, in Europe, and, above all, in Germany, had already taken firm root. Appointed Consultant for Synagogue Architecture by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, I urged the introduction of this new style, and Rabbi Jacob D. Schwarz, the Union's Director of the Commission on Synagogue Activities, lent this suggestion a ready ear. With his characteristic energy and flair for organization, he issued, in 1946, a pamphlet entitled *Synagogue Building Plans*. This was followed, in 1947, by two very successful synagogue building conferences, held in New York and in Chicago, respectively, at which questions concerning modern synagogue building were discussed by architects, artists, and congregational leaders.

Less than ten years have passed since these events, and today there are synagogues from coast to coast which, in material and style, bear all the marks of the present day: the use of concrete and glass, concealed lighting, and pre-eminence of function at the expense of ornamentation.

At this high point of achievement it was natural that a desire should be felt to trace the history of American synagogue architecture from its beginnings in the eighteenth century to the present day. No one was better suited to fulfill this desire than Mrs. Rachel Wischnitzer. She, too, was a recent arrival, already enjoying great prestige as one of the outstanding connoisseurs of Jewish art. Her training in architecture qualified her particularly to deal with this branch of art. She brought to her self-imposed task her gift for research and her enthusiasm for work, and today, as a result of her labors, there lies before us a book which can only be described as perfect.

Nor was her task, at least as far as the nineteenth century is concerned, a gratifying one. The past century was one of high achievement in painting; one need only think of the works of Manet, Renoir, Liebermann, Cézanne, and van Gogh. But the architecture of that period was weak: it looked backward instead of forward.

It copied now this, now that style from the past, and thereby lost contact with contemporary life, which inspires all creative impulse in art.

Mrs. Wischnitzer acknowledges this fact. In special sections she deals with the revivals of Greek, Romanesque, Gothic, and Moorish styles, and with that New Classicism which arose from a knowledge of Palestinian synagogue ruins. Nor did the author fail to cite other features, such as the introduction of the central plan — which gave rise to the distinguished synagogues by Charles R. Greco — or the twin towers on the façade — a nonsensical addition because the synagogue, lacking bells, needs no towers. Now and again individual artists receive special mention, like the associates Louis Sullivan and Dankmar Adler, the latter the son of a rabbi. The historic and economic conditions behind the erection of synagogues are also treated in an enlightening manner. The author exerted special talent in making a difficult subject palatable through ever new schematizations and observations.

The volume is profusely highlighted with photographs and other illustrations of synagogues, past and present. An enthusiastic admirer of present-day architecture, the author devotes the latter part of the book to the contemporary synagogue, making it a rich source of inspiration and stimulation both to architects and to congregations contemplating the erection of a synagogue.

Finally, as far as these architects are concerned, it affords us special satisfaction that they almost all belong to our faith, whereas the synagogues of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries were built, in many instances, by non-Jews. And among these contemporary architects are gifted artists like Percival Goodman, Fritz Nathan, and Eric Mendelsohn — the last, unfortunately, no longer living.

Paper, typeface, reproductions, and binding, all these are handled with consummate care.

*Hebrew Union College - Jewish  
Institute of Religion*

FRANZ LANDSBERGER

THE CITY OF HOPE. By Samuel H. Golter. *New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.* 1954. xii, 177 pp. \$3.50

In the *City of Hope* Samuel H. Golter has attempted a difficult literary task: against the background of the Jewish question, to

integrate an autobiography with a description of the institution that he guided to eminence. The technique used is that of interweaving, sometimes in the same paragraph, elements of his personal history and philosophy with episodes in the development of a medical center in Duarte, California.

The hospital, whose name provides the title of the book, began in 1913 as two tents in the desert for the care of tuberculous patients. It grew, with the support of the Jewish Consumptive Relief Association, to a cluster of frame cottages in 1926, when the author became its superintendent. In the twenty-nine years of his administration the institution expanded from a small tuberculosis sanitarium to a chronic disease research hospital of 293 beds, with full accreditation and with American Medical Association approval for medical resident training. Throughout its development it preserved its principles of being nonsectarian and of maintaining at all costs the dignity of the patient. These two guiding principles justify the autobiographical core of the book.

Written in the form of letters to the seventeen-year-old daughter of the author, the volume begins and ends with the problem of prejudice and humiliation. Even after achieving national recognition in his own inspiring work and acquiring sufficient confidence in himself to give up what he repeatedly stresses as his "confirmed bachelorhood," the author is deeply hurt by the remark of a casual couple who notice his newborn child behind the glass in the premature nursery and say: "That must be a Jew baby." These words, whether spoken in ignorance or in derogation, apparently struck a cruel blow to Golter's ecstatic hopes for a better world for this, his few-hours-old baby. The phrase symbolized for him all the insults and persecution directed at the Jew since pre-Mosaic days, and brought back to him the miseries of his own childhood. The incident, he writes, "added a sense of mission to my life-work. On that day I rededicated myself to the purpose of making good will toward men more real by magnifying the humanitarian values fostered and practiced at the City of Hope and by developing apostles to give these values a wide circulation."

In this worthwhile purpose he succeeded because the hospital is a good example of modern, effective, dignified, nonsectarian philanthropy. But philosophers may dispute the ethical value of resentment as a valid force for either charity or achievement. Probably both the magnificent work of the City of Hope and its unusual atmosphere of spiritual brotherhood in practice would have

come about anyway as a result of Golter's demonstrated intelligent energy and his keen emotional sensitivity. The remark was actually only a coincidence. But by keeping alive and quivering a seventeen-year-old (or 4,000-year-old) bruise, the author leaves the reader with an unintended impression, namely, that the patients in the hospital might quote Second Isaiah: "With his stripes we are healed."

*Cincinnati, Ohio*

ARTHUR G. KING, M.D.

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## The Old Book Shelf

### Reviews of the Literature of the Past

From time to time, the *American Jewish Archives* will carry reviews of outstanding books that appeared years ago. These publications, we believe, will prove of interest and value to the present-day historian. The review of *Prejudice Against the Jew* is the second in this series.

The reviewer, Robert E. Segal, is Executive Director of the Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Boston, and has served as consultant, lecturer, and writer in the field of human relations since 1940. He is a member of the Board of Governors of the Boston University Human Relations Center, a member of the Executive Board of the Boston Mayor's Committee, and a past Chairman of the Boston Intergroup Relations Council. He was also one of the founders of Temple Shalom, of Newton, Mass., and its first president.

PREJUDICE AGAINST THE JEW — ITS NATURE, ITS CAUSES AND REMEDIES, A Symposium by Foremost Christians, Published in *The American Hebrew*, April 4, 1890. With a Foreword by Philip Cowen. *New York: Philip Cowen.* 1928. 158 pp.

On February 11, 1890, Philip Cowen, the publisher and managing editor of *The American Hebrew*, of New York, dispatched to a number of highly-placed and highly-regarded educators, clergymen, editors, political figures, and persons prominent in the field of arts and letters an inquiry based in part on attitudes of antipathy harbored against Jews, "particularly during the summer season." He mentioned specifically the exclusion of Jews from summer resorts (the New York banker Joseph Seligman and his family had been refused admission at the Grand Union Hotel, at Saratoga Springs, N. Y., in the summer of 1877), school discrimination, and the blackballing of Jews from social clubs. Cowen posed these questions:

1. Can you, of your own personal experience, find any justification whatever for the entertainment of prejudice towards individuals solely because they are Jews?
2. Is not this prejudice due largely to the religious instruction which is given by the church and Sunday school — for instance, the teachings that the Jews crucified Jesus; that they rejected him and can secure salvation only by means of belief in him; and similar matters which are calculated to excite in the impressionable mind of the child an aversion, if not a loathing, for members of “the despised race”?
3. Have you observed, in the social or business life of the Jew, so far as your personal experience has gone, any different standard of conduct from that which prevails among Christians of the same social status?
4. Can you suggest what should be done to dispel the existing prejudice?

Cowen received a generous response, largely gratifying, incisive, candid, and stimulating.

A few of the great American spirits of the day faced up to their honest convictions that teachings about the crucifixion were at the heart of anti-Jewish attitudes and actions. Others found the explanation in ostentation, boorishness, overaggressiveness, and clannishness. Many acknowledged that Cowen’s disarming questions had sent them scurrying to their deepest religious strengths for honest answers. A few, as might be expected, either sidestepped the issue or handled the inquiry gingerly, making haste to get the intruding and offensive questionnaire off a neat desk.

Cowen himself concluded that “prejudice is innately religious; unconsciously so as a general thing.” He was joined in this conclusion by George W. Curtis, Dr. Titus M. Coan, and Zebulon B. Vance. In order to bring influential testimony to his findings, he directed attention to the comprehensive reply which Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes had sent him. This spirited response, published by Holmes in *Over The Teacups*, recalled a hymn:

See what a living stone  
The builders did refuse!  
Yet God has built his church thereon,  
In spite of envious Jews.

And Holmes borrowed, in turn, from Emerson, who had hailed and thrown a religious cordon sanitaire around the central figure of Christianity thus:

This was Jehovah come down out of heaven. I will kill you if you say he was a man.

If these lines from "the Wisest American" startle us, let us all the more keep them in mind when this age of mass communication and oversimplification throws on the screen a cross larger than cinerama itself, underscoring the unique crime of deicide.

The kindly and impish Dr. Holmes closed his reply to Cowen by quoting in full his poem, "At the Pantomime." Therein he related the change in his attitude from one of repugnance towards Jews (black-bearded, swarthy, beaked, unbelieving) who crowded him one hot August day in a non-air-conditioned room to a sense of appreciation for the precursors of these people who had, after all, given the world "the Maiden's Boy of Bethlehem."

In addition to Dr. Holmes, other illustrious men and women peer up from Cowen's intriguing inquiry of sixty-five years ago. Theodore Roosevelt is there with that granddaddy of bromidic disclaimers: "Some of my most valued friends are Hebrews." In Cowen's book, one learns, Washington Gladden observed, long before Dorothy Thompson did, that "the Jew . . . is very much like the average American, only a little more so." Eloquent and unbelieving Robert G. Ingersoll speaks his mind about the crucifixion blame: "There is no chapter in history as cruel, as relentless, as the chapter in which is told the manner in which Christians — those who love their enemies — have treated the Jewish people." A discerning Carl Schurz observes that those "who most loudly insist upon judging men by their religion or national origin rather than by their character, have themselves not much character to be proud of." And a voice from the grave: a letter from George Eliot to Harriet Beecher Stowe (October 29, 1876), explaining why the British novelist treated Jews with such understanding in *Daniel Deronda* and complaining about some who, ignorant of Christ's Jewish origin, "make small jokes about eating ham."

Here is a direct route into the heart of this symposium: the kind hearts and gentle people approached by Cowen, by and large, saw anti-Jewishness in 1890 as a problem of manners. Great humans like Edward Everett Hale and Phillips Brooks appeared completely innocent of talk of such a problem. Victoria was on her throne; God was in His heaven; and where was the Jewish gaucherie that a mild course in etiquette could not cure? It was such a simple matter for these dear souls. For Dr. Robert S. McArthur, for example, the law of politeness flowing from the Golden Rule was sufficient.

The Rev. Charles F. Deems could think of "no people who suffer so much on account of . . . vulgar Jews as high minded, cultivated,



refined Hebrew ladies and gentlemen." And in the judgment of the famed Washington Gladden: "If among the Jews there is an over-development of mercantilism, then there must be among them an under-development of the amenities and the humanities by which our social life is brightened and sweetened."

Some spoke right up about "Christian envy of big Jewish diamonds," flashy dress, gold and jewels, boors, loud manners, and "the common Jew and his host of noisy children" at the best watering places. Professor C. H. Toy at Harvard reminded Editor Cowen that Jews had bodily habits that were not good.

That old devil, clannishness, came in for considerable mention, as one might expect. It was the view of the Rev. William H. P. Faunce that this huddling together amounted to an indifference to popular opinion, indeed, almost to open defiance and to "a lack of genuine patriotism." Some, seeking to prescribe for this ill, reckoned that Germans and Swedes managed to Americanize; so why shouldn't Jews? A more pointed rendition of the same theme came from those who suggested, as did Elliott F. Shepard, that all Jews be brought "into fellowship with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ."

Dr. Charles W. Eliot had a proposal with an interesting twist. He recommended the careful education of women so that Jewish ladies might be "inevitably recognized as attractive and cultivated women in any society." And let the young Jewish men take part in "manly sports and in the militia organizations."

From Bishop H. C. Potter of New York came a "build-a-better-mousetrap" suggestion. He wanted to see Hebrew capital put up Hebrew hotels, clubhouses, and private schools, soon to be found crowded with all the Christians whom they were willing to admit inasmuch as excellence is the passport to recognition. In similar vein, William Dean Howells saw a need to "Christianize the Christians," and the famed editor of the *Boston Pilot*, John Boyle O'Reilly, would have dispelled anti-Jewish prejudice by expressing his respect, honor, and affection for "the greatest race that ever existed."

Some had obviously given painstaking thought to Cowen's letter. Even before the insights of Freud and Dewey had revealed the truths of frustration-aggression behavior in the pincers of a sluggish and materialistic society, a few of the respondents recognized the Jew in the role of scapegoat and demurred from offering the too cruel, too facile solution: the forfeit of religious and cultural distinctiveness.

These are the spiritual and intellectual kin of a modern Gordon Allport, who has found that our highly competitive society, putting a premium on material success, offers an environment in which socially approved prejudices flourish, an Allport who reasons that a prejudiced attitude is not like a cinder in the eye which can be extracted without disturbing the integrity of the organism as a whole.

"Defeated intellectually," says Allport, "prejudice lingers emotionally." And so it has been shown to the enlightened sons and daughters of those fine respondents of Cowen. For prejudice against Jews failed to disappear despite the assurance which the *Brooklyn Times* gave to that effect in 1890, in commenting on the provocative study. Instead, the years that followed produced burgeoning nationalism, battenning in part on political anti-Semitism. The twentieth century brought to America the pseudoscientific racism of Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard. Ugly chauvinisms and intellectual claptrap, in turn, soon were being hawked and popularized by every means of mass communication. The demagogue of the machine age then seized his cue. He rode to power by the sly use of divisive appeals to prejudice. And he was not alone. The insatiable American urge to get ahead led thousands of otherwise reasonable persons to indulge in discriminatory practices, not just at the summer resorts which were Cowen's point of departure, but in colleges, in office buildings, in factories, in hospitals, and in the newly-minted American suburbs.

So it is that we must realize that the sons and daughters of Cowen's well-meaning collaborators will need more than spiritual sweetness to make adequate answer to prejudice. They must undercut the jungle in which prejudice flourishes; they must provide housing, health aids, recreation, jobs, status, recognition, counsel for their fellow Americans. They must demolish the arenas in which hostilities are free to flourish. They must labor to get the unintentioned down off the fence and into the camp of the fellowship of the concerned. They must strive in classrooms, in neighborhood centers, on the playing fields, in health clinics, in every avenue of commerce, in legislative halls, in pulpit, in Sunday schools, and in the control towers of mass communication, to unlock tensions so that talents may flourish in an untrammelled society rooted not in prejudice, but in mutual respect.

*Boston, Mass.*

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