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©1980 by the American Jewish Archives
Louis Marshall
(1856-1929)
Outstanding spokesman for the American Jewish community and a leading constitutional lawyer of his time.

Courtesy of The American Jewish Committee
A Fresh Look at Louis Marshall and Zionism, 1900-1912

Jerome C. Rosenthal

I

The American Jewish community is the largest, the most affluent and influential Jewry in the 2,500-year history of the Diaspora. It is the first to enjoy the benefits of full emancipation since Biblical days.

The story of the colonies' break from English rule is, of course, a familiar one, as is that of the evolution of the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights. These events and documents provided the framework for the free, democratic existence of most residents of the United States. That basic framework was neither complete nor perfect. It needed to be challenged, expanded and shaped, a process requiring much effort and courage. Louis Marshall (1856-1929) played a key role in the process of shaping that framework, especially as it related to the American Jewish community.

Marshall was privileged to begin his public life at the time of a rapidly developing America and a concurrently developing American Jewry. For nearly thirty years, he was to be in the forefront of the battles to protect the social, political and economic rights of the American Jew. No other American Jew became so consistently involved in the most significant issues affecting American Jews and their status than did Louis Marshall. No other Jewish lay leader of the time enjoyed as much top-level political influence in both the executive and legislative branches of state and national government for so long a period of time as did this distinguished personality. No other American Jew was characterized as being

Jerome C. Rosenthal practiced law in Buffalo, N.Y., for 25 years. He is now a doctoral candidate in American Jewish history at the University of Cincinnati.
so eloquent, fearless and honest a spokesman for American Jewry. Louis Marshall had the good fortune to be born and educated in America before massive immigration began in 1881. He became the leading spokesman of the American Jewish elite, mostly upperclass Jews of German background. As a highly successful constitutional lawyer, first in Syracuse, New York and later in New York City, he began to demonstrate enormous leadership qualities.

Part of Marshall’s greatness is reflected in the breadth of his interest, in Jewish as well as non-Jewish causes. His time and efforts were not limited solely to creating and building a first-rate institution for Jewish delinquents in New York City, or defending the honor of the East Side immigrant community against unfair accusations of criminality, or, as a leader of the American Jewish Committee, fighting to keep the gates of immigration open to Eastern European Jews, or battling Czarist Russia’s discrimination against American Jewish citizens. He also helped establish a fine rabbinic seminary, aided in the creation of one of the most effective Jewish defense organizations, and worked hard for unification of a chaotic New York Jewish community. At the same time he fought for the creation of the nation’s first forestry science college, broke the legal barriers against Blacks in primary elections, and defended duly elected Socialist legislators who had been barred from taking office. He dictated an apology signed by Henry Ford, the leading anti-Semite of the 1920’s, and for many years acted as a one-man police force, personally refuting statements of newspapers, judges, and public officials all over the country which insulted the Jewish immigrant or questioned the American Jew’s social, political and economic rights. He possessed a brilliant mind and a dedication to high purpose, and his forceful personality was to leave its mark on every issue with which he dealt. This was true with regard to Louis Marshall’s early attitudes toward Zionism and the Zionist movement in America.

II

The wealthy and influential German Jews of early 20th-century America, the cream of the so-called "our crowd" circle, have been frequently and harshly berated for their supposed anti-Zionist position. This blanket criticism of Jewish leaders who did so much for the American Jewish community of their time includes Louis Marshall.

Most of Marshall's close acquaintances and working associates within the American Jewish Committee, the leading American Jewish defense organization of its time, were admittedly cool toward political Zionism, if not overtly anti-Zionists. The exceptions, like Rabbis Max Heller and Judah Magnes, were few and far between. Marshall, unlike others of his rank, never harbored any bitterness toward the fledgling Zionist movement which was just beginning to achieve a measure of success in the early twentieth century. Despite the serious doubts he had about the success of the movement, Marshall believed that Palestine could serve as a spiritual center of world Jewry.

It was Marshall, in fact, more than any other contemporary American Jewish leader who eloquently voiced this sympathy for the early Zionist efforts in the first decade of the twentieth century. He frequently extolled the Jewish colonization work and reclamation projects in Palestine. In a letter to Nathan Straus he wrote:

As you know, I am not a Zionist, certainly not a Nationalist. I am a Jew from conviction and sentiment, one who takes pride in the literature, the history, the traditions, and the spiritual and intellectual contributions which Judaism has made to the world and as I grow older, the feelings of love and reverence for the cradle of our race increase in intensity. . . . It becomes the bounden duty of those of our people who have been blessed by Providence with worldly possessions, and who are at the same time imbued with the sentiments of love and loyalty for Judaism and its institutions, to concentrate their efforts toward development of that land, which, after all, should rouse the most tender feelings in the heart of every Jew.

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1 A number of older works dealing with the American Jewish experience reflect this point of view.
2 Melvin I. Urofsky, American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust, N.Y., 1975, p. 98.
Unfortunately, the quality of Zionist leadership before 1914 was such that Marshall and others of his opinion simply dismissed it as unworthy of support. Marshall assessed the situation in the following manner: "If the (Zionist) leader knows less than I do, how can I follow him?"

III

Although Marshall was fully aware of the political movement to establish Palestine as a homeland for Jews, he had no sympathy with it early in the first decade of this century. Ever besieged by all manner of Jewish groups to address them, he usually refused, with the exception of educational lectures to Jewish Theological Seminary classes and Temple Emanu-El auxiliaries. When asked to address a Zionist group in 1901, he declined, saying that he could not conscientiously avail himself of the invitation.

While I sympathize heartily with every movement which tends to ameliorate the condition of our co-religionists, I have been unable to convince myself that the nationalistic movement represented by the Zionists possesses any element of practicality...and much as I have been impressed by the enthusiasm of Herzl, Nordau and Zangwill in respect to the Palestine restoration, I can view it merely in the light of a poet's dream.  

It is important to note Marshall's sincere concern for Jews all over the world including Palestine, and that it was the political movement for which he had no concern. In 1904 he contributed $25 for the fund for the children of Theodor Herzl when an appeal was made by the Federation of American Zionists, because "he admired Herzl."

When his friend, the registrar of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Adolphus S. Solomons, asked for Marshall's help in a movement by the Zionists to move Jews out of Russia to some colony on another continent due to the terrible pogroms, he refused to help.

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7 Louis Marshall to Federation of American Zionists, 8/29/04, AJA-MP.
The people of Russia will have to work out their own salvation, as other people have done. A colonial scheme of the character proposed has never succeeded since the world began. You cannot transfer a large body of people from one country to another and make anything else of them than a dependent class.

He objected to the organized moving of a large group en masse as against the type of immigration experienced in the United States which he supported wholeheartedly.

When his friend Rabbi Max Heller of New Orleans became a staunch Zionist, Marshall said he just did not believe that the Russian Jews could solve their problems through Zionism. Instead, he believed that "eventually Russia will have a free government and Jews there will be able to enjoy rights and privileges as they do elsewhere.”

Another part of Marshall’s greatness lay in his ability to change his mind when convinced of the correctness of a position. In 1908 he was so enthusiastic about a new book on Zionism written in German (which he knew fluently) by Dr. Max Stolp, called Das Judentum am Scheidewege, that he sent it to Jacob H. Schiff to read. He called it the best and most convincing presentation of the Zionist cause he had seen.

It has certainly given me new ideas and has led me to regard the cause which it advocates with better understanding and with much more sympathy than I have heretofore given it.

With this new attitude, he was persuaded by Dr. Solomon Schechter of the Jewish Theological Seminary to act as a trustee of the Technicum (later changed to Technion) in Palestine. He did so with some misgivings because he believed that the money spent here (i.e., New York City) would do more good."

He was also concerned with assuming responsibility for a work being carried on 5,000 miles away by people of whom I know but little or nothing. However, I can salve my conscience by the thought that if I am making a mistake, I am doing so in good company and with good motives.

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1 Louis Marshall to A. S. Solomons, 10/21/05, AJA-MP.
2 Louis Marshall to Max Heller, 12/20/05, AJA-MP.
3 Louis Marshall to Jacob H. Schiff, 10/2/08, AJA-MP.
4 Louis Marshall to Dr. Solomon Schechter, 12/28/08, AJA-MP.
In 1909 he gave a $100 contribution to the American School for Oriental Research in Palestine recommended by Professor Richard Gottheil of Columbia University.\(^\text{12}\)

He helped to raise money for the technical school at Haifa and wrote letters to many wealthy Jews to obtain financial support. In this process he assured Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck and Co., that "the institute is not Zionist. In the words of Mr. Schiff, it is wedded to no ism save Judaism."\(^\text{13}\)

On this understanding Schiff contributed $100,000, and Dr. Schechter, Dr. Cyrus Adler, Mortimer L. Schiff all became members of the American Board of Directors with Marshall.

One of Marshall's largest undertakings in Palestine was the Jewish Agricultural Experiment Station. He became interested through a young agricultural scientist named Aaron Aaronsohn, who had discovered how to grow a prototype of wheat, barley, rye and oats. World-renowned German botanists and the United States Department of Agriculture had praised Aaronsohn's discovery. As to the purpose, the Station would develop the commercial wheat of the world, which was a degenerate plant, to its pristine strength, by means of cross fertilization with the primitive wheat. The great advantage of this will be that the primitive wheat flourishes in arid regions and that the kernel is larger and possesses better nutritive qualities than the wheat of today. If the experiments carry out only a small fraction of what is anticipated, they will do much toward solving the difficulties of agriculture in the arid regions of the world.\(^\text{14}\)

The plan sought to create an experimental agricultural station to test for five years the growing potentials in the arid Palestinian soil. The original cost was to be $20,000 which Schiff and Rosenwald would cover. Marshall drew up all the incorporation papers with a careful eye to the limited non-Zionist purposes. He personally spent a great deal of time and energy not only putting the concept into a viable entity legally but also undertook to raise the operating funds needed for the five years, by soliciting among his

\(^{12}\) Louis Marshall to Professor Joseph Jacobs, 6/11/09, AJA-MP.

\(^{13}\) Louis Marshall to Julius Rosenwald, 2/2/09, AJA-MP.

\(^{14}\) Louis Marshall to Jesse Straus, 3/8/10, AJA-MP.
well-to-do coterie. He wrote many letters of introduction to important people for Aaronsohn to make his own pitch.

There were complications from the start. He had to reassure Jacob Schiff that

there was no possibility of having our movement construed as Zionist in its tendency. The undertaking is declared to be exclusively on a scientific and educational basis, without a religious, national or political tendency of any kind.

Most of his coterie were of like mind in not wishing to be associated with a "Zionistic" cause.

The need for land for the station brought into sharp focus the emotional and intellectual conflicts in the situation. Marshall understood that a direct purchase of land would easily be misconstrued as a Zionist act. He suggested accepting a grant of land from one of the Zionist land owning groups as more palatable. He told Aaronsohn that Schiff was dead set against buying the needed land from the Zionist National Fund on the ground that "he does not want to be a tail to the Zionist kite."

But he also told him that he personally had no objection to being assisted by whatever source was available, so long as "we are not labeled as a Zionist organization."

Marshall had to keep Schiff's goodwill but never hesitated to set forth his opinions.

As you know, I am a non-Zionist but not an anti-Zionist. I object fully as much as you do to being publicly connected with a Zionist undertaking. Yet I can see no objection to the acceptance of financial aid from a Zionist or Zionist organization.

His mood was one of frustration because he became involved in the Experimental Station to a much greater extent than he first anticipated. He had the chores of writing letters to solicit funds, letters of introduction and all the legal work too.

15 Louis Marshall to Adolph Lewisohn, 11/20/09, AJA-MP.
16 Louis Marshall to Daniel Guggenheim, 11/24/09, AJA-MP.
17 Louis Marshall to Jacob H. Schiff, 3/22/10, AJA-MP.
18 Louis Marshall to A. Aaronsohn, 3/26/10, AJA-MP.
19 Louis Marshall to Jacob H. Schiff, 3/26/10, AJA-MP. See also Marshall's article in the American Hebrew of 9/20/07 in which he expressed warm sympathy and admiration for the Zionist movement while clearly excluding himself from the cause.
My past experience in these matters has been that not only the labor but also the expense of such organization has fallen upon me individually. . . . I feel rather annoyed at the idea that everybody seems to cast his burdens upon me and that my good nature is presumed upon in this as in other matters. As it is, I am overwhelmed with work; I have not a moment of leisure time. . . .

It was the same process all over again as he had experienced with creating the Jewish Protectory, reorganizing the Jewish Theological Seminary and launching the American Jewish Committee. Everyone seemed to know that Louis Marshall was not only bright and able but a workhorse too.

Henrietta Szold helped with the paper work on the Station and the list of contributors for the operating fund showed Marshall at $300, Rosenwald and Schiff at $2000 each, Paul Warburg at $1000 and Isaac Seligman at $1000, among others.20

Marshall had great hopes for the Station and told his friend Dr. Cyrus Adler, “If I had the money I would be glad to finance the entire enterprise but inasmuch as I have not, I must depend upon the moods and humors of the millionaires.”21 The Experimental Station had very difficult times, and during World War I the Turks destroyed it and all of Dr. Aaronsohn’s efforts came to naught. Later on, Dr. Aaronsohn was killed in an airplane crash.22

He was interested enough in Zionism in 1911 to have read the proceedings of the Zionist convention but told his young Zionist brother-in-law, Rabbi Magnes, that he “was not impressed by anything it said or did.”23 Yet there was a firmness in his opposition to the idea advanced by German Jews who also supported the Technicum in Haifa, that German should be the language of the school. He and the American Jews on the Board were unanimously for the use of Hebrew as well as Arabic in the school, but Hebrew was to “receive the place of honor in the institution.”24

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20 Louis Marshall to A. Aaronsohn, 1/13/10, AJA-MP.
21 Louis Marshall to Henrietta Szold, 3/3/10, AJA-MP.
22 Louis Marshall to Cyrus Adler, 1/18/10, AJA-MP.
23 Louis Marshall Address to University of State of New York at Albany, 10/21/21, AJA-MP.
24 Louis Marshall to J. L. Magnes, 7/29/11, AJA-MP.
25 Louis Marshall to Abraham Goldberg, 11/1/13, AJA-MP.
Furthermore, Marshall seemed to be catching some of the new spirit of the Zionists who were engaged in the creation of new colonies in Palestine and were financed by Baron de Rothschild. He portrayed this in a letter to a friend and fellow Jewish communal leader when he said,

Since Baron de Rothschild undertook the work of establishing Jewish colonies in Palestine, of developing upon its sacred soil agricultural and industrial activities, of again turning the eyes of the Jews to the possibilities of reestablishing it as the home of the victims of oppression in other lands, a new impetus has been given to our people, a new type of men has arisen, the Maccabean spirit has revived. . . .

He also showed sympathy for the practical needs of developing Palestine: "Lands must be acquired to give scope for the operations of those who are now attracted to Palestine."26

Marshall, being a practical person, envisioned Palestine as the haven for the hundreds of thousands of Eastern European Jews yet to leave their old world homes. He foresaw the problem of America's gates closing on them.

Until now we have been enabled to keep open the doors of opportunity, but the time has come when I greatly fear that restrictive immigration laws will be passed, with the result that, to a considerable extent, the storm-tossed children of Russia and Rumanian Ghettos will be unable to receive admittance here. Hence it becomes the bounden duty of those of our people who have been blessed by Providence with worldly possessions, and who are at the same time imbued with the sentiments of love and loyalty for Judaism and its institutions, to concentrate their efforts toward the development of that land. . . . I am not a mere dreamer when I express the conviction that it is possible that large tracts of land may be acquired in Palestine for the development of agriculture and the establishment of extensive industries and for the creation of a permanent home for those of us who have had no secure abiding place.27

It appears that Louis Marshall was more of a Zionist than he realized, at least in so far as the physical development of the land was concerned and its usefulness as a haven for the Eastern European Jews still to come out of Europe. Yet he certainly would not have supported the Zionist concept which denied a meaningful Jewish survival in the

26 Louis Marshall to Nathan Straus, 1/20/14, AJA-MP.
27 Ibid.
Diaspora. Nor is it probable that he would have favored emigration to Palestine for American Jewry. Since those opening years of the 20th-century, Marshall's views about a meaningful Jewish existence in the Diaspora and the question of massive American immigration to Palestine have come to be valid points in the eyes of American Zionists today.
Were the pioneer Jews of Pittsburgh Bavarians? Not necessarily, although it was stated as such in a recent article touching on the question.¹

During the Mexican War (1846-1848), many Jews settled in booming Pittsburgh, which had been rebuilt over its ashes. While born in Europe, they had of late lived in the Philadelphia area and especially Ohio as well as in Maryland, Virginia, and New York.²

Congregation Rodef Shalom of Pittsburgh obtained a charter in court in October of 1859. Yet, only one of its 23 charter subscribers, Louis Stern, had appeared in a city directory before Pittsburgh’s great fire of 1845. He was a native of Hamburg, Germany. His wife was Bavarian, however.³

Even earlier, twelve pioneers of the local Jewish community in 1847 organized the Bes Almon (Burial) Society, the earliest known Jewish organization in Pittsburgh. They had decided to spend their limited funds on a cemetery rather than maintain a congregation. One of them, a shochet by training, offered his services to the small community.⁴

⁴ Israelite, August 25, 1854, p. 54.

Jacob S. Feldman, the leading historian of Pittsburgh Jewry, has recently completed a history of the Jews of Western Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh to 1924.
But his name and the names of the majority of the twelve pioneers are not disclosed in the available sources. A key, in learning who they were, is the 1847 city business directory, listing approximately 10 Jews. What is known about their place of birth? Two of them, Ancker and Mayer, partners in a clothing store, moved away from Pittsburgh before 1850. Available local records do not indicate where they were born. Mitchell Ancker had resided in the city as early as 1839, but the 1840 census for Pittsburgh is illegible.5

Four dry goods dealers in the 1847 directory, the brothers Jacob and Emanuel Klein and the brothers Solomon and Emanuel Reis, were listed in the census only as having been born in Germany. It is impossible to determine their native principality or town.6

But Louis Hirshfield, the proprietor of the Shirt Emporium and reputedly the first president of the burial society, and his wife had been born in Prussia. Mrs. William (Paulina) Frank and her brother, Ephraim Wormser who did not appear in the 1847 city directory but seems to have been here that year, were the forerunners of a sizeable local colony from the German kingdom of Wurtemberg. Nevertheless, two of the three men purchasing the cemetery on Troy Hill for the burial society, the dry goods dealers William Frank and David Strasburger, were Bavarians.7

Since more Jews settled in Pittsburgh in a short space of time, the first Jewish congregation here, Shaare Shamayim, was organized in 1848; and an expensive rented hall above the Vigilant Fire Engine House was dedicated as the house of worship in an elaborate ceremony on August 3, 1849. It has not been learned who the first synagogue president was; but Nathan Gallinger, a Bavarian who had moved to Pittsburgh and recently from Somerset, Ohio, near Cincinnati, was reputedly elected president of the burial society.

5 Feldman., op. cit., p. 10; Harris, Pittsburgh Directory, 1847, p. 15
6 1850 Pittsburgh Census, vol. 2, p. 691. (Reis's); 1860 Pittsburgh Census, Armstrong County, Pa., Kittanning, p. 80 (Klein's).
7 1860 Pittsburgh Census, vol. 1, p. 263 and 356; Harris, Pittsburgh Directory, 1847, pp. 56, 73, and 147; Deed Book 79, Allegheny County, Pa., p. 46; Jewish Criterion, April 3, 1903, p. 3 (The early records of the burial society seem to have then been in existence and available to the magazine.)
in 1848. Although the minister and hazan, Rev. Moses Sulzbach, was listed in the 1850 census only as having been born in Germany, more has been ascertained about the regional backgrounds of other Jews in Pittsburgh arriving after 1848. The first known president of Shaare Shamayim, Charles V. Arnsthal, a tobacco dealer, who left office in 1852, was a native of Hamburg.

At that time slightly over 30 Jewish families lived in Pittsburgh. But 12 men, who were mostly Posener (Prussian-Polish natives), broke off from this synagogue and organized the short-lived Beth Israel Congregation because they believed that the burial society and Shaare Shamayim should not have been separate entities. Lithuanians and Posener were collectively termed as Polanders, yet Alexander Fink (Vilna, Lithuania) remained with Shaare Shamayim and was elected as its president in September of 1852. Soon the misunderstandings were reconciled. While the burial society would continue on as a separate entity, the Beth Israel faction rejoined Shaare Shamayim in April of 1853, when Leopold Jaroslawski, a Posener, took office as its president.

In 1854, William Armhold (Baden) was hired as minister and hazan. Eventually, the Polanders and some Germans became disenchanted with him. A small classified ad was entered in the Occident of October, 1855, advising that Louis Hirshfield, president of Shaare Shamayim, was taking applications for a new minister. The South Germans — the Badener, Wurtemberger, Darmstadter, and most of the Bavarians — had not been able to muster a majority vote on behalf of Armhold. Therefore, evidently in September of 1855, they created a new Orthodox congregation, Rodef Shalom, retaining Armhold as minister. Marx Arnold (Wurtemburg), a clothier, would serve as its president from April, 1856, to April, 1859.

In April of 1856, 20 children were enrolled at its Hebrew school and 22 at the Shaare Shamayim school. Rodef Shalom, at first slightly smaller, began outgrowing its rival by garner-
ing as members the many new South Germans in Pittsburgh. Some of the Prussians, primarily those from German areas, also joined Rodef Shalom.\textsuperscript{12}

In April of 1859, Joseph Myers, a drover (livestock dealer), began a successful one-year term as president of Rodef Shalom as membership rose to 35 families. He and his brother, Louis, had resided in Pittsburgh continuously since 1850 or earlier and were the forerunners of a sizeable colony from the German principality of Baden.\textsuperscript{13}

A few Darmstadter, namely the 3 Oppenheimer brothers, also settled in town; and the most prominent of the few English Jews here, 20-year-old Josiah Cohen, started as an English studies teacher at the Rodef Shalom Parochial School on April 3, 1860.\textsuperscript{14}

At the same time, Shaare Shamayim was not increasing in membership. "We rather look for encouragement keeping it up," Leopold Jaroslawski lamented in 1858, "we are few in number."\textsuperscript{15}

The situation did not improve when Jaroslawski, his father Solomon, and his brother Jacob, who also had been synagogue president, moved from Pittsburgh. Furthermore, the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} \textit{Occident,} May, 1854, p. 116; Mar., 1855, pp. 617-18; Oct., 1855, adv. 5; \textit{Israelite,} May 22, 1856, p. 374; Jacob R. Marcus, \textit{Memoirs Of American Jews,} vol. 1, pp. 303-308 (Here, William Frank's autobiography is recorded. He wrote it approximately three decades after the split in the synagogue had occurred; and his memory for dates was faulty. Rodef Shalom could not have been founded prior to Rosh Hashanah of 1854 as he declared. The article in the March, 1855, \textit{Occident} verified that Shaare Shamayim was still the only congregation in Pittsburgh. But William Frank's narrative information seems correct. The classified ad in the Oct., 1855, \textit{Occident} for a new minister is an indication that there had been a problem in Pittsburgh at that time. Thus, to place the creation of the original Rodef Shalom as Sept. of 1855 is quite logical. But the \textit{Israelite} of May 22, 1856, reported that Rodef Shalom had been organized "April last." The editor, however, was not on the scene in Pittsburgh and may have drawn the conclusion because Marx Arnold had begun serving as synagogue president in April, 1856.

The minutes of all synagogues of Pittsburgh prior to 1858 are lost, so that other sources must be relied on.

\item \textsuperscript{13} \textit{Israelite,} May 27, 1859, p. 326; Aug. 10, 1860, p. 46; 1860 Pittsburgh Census, vol. 2, pp. 331 and 353.

\item \textsuperscript{14} \textit{Occident,} Apr. 11, 1860, p. 17; 1860 Pittsburgh Census, vol. 2, p. 644; Charles I. Cooper, "The Story of The Jews of Pittsburgh," \textit{Criterion,} May 31, 1918, pp. 21-22 (Jacob Affelder, a resident of Pittsburgh since 1858, recalled the birthplace of many early Jews here. His good memory greatly coincided with the census records.)

\item \textsuperscript{15} \textit{Occident,} Oct., 1858, p. 353.
\end{itemize}
local colony of Lithuanian Jews, which supported Shaare Shamayim, was not increasing. Only two Lithuanian men, Adolph Burkhart, a liquor dealer, and Henry Hershberg, a partner with the Finks in a clothing store, settled in Pittsburgh on a permanent basis between 1856 and 1860; and Fink's former partner, Jacob Silverman, died a young man in 1856. His oldest son, 21-year-old Alexander, taking charge of a brood of orphaned brothers and sisters, did, however, attend Shaare Shamayim.  

The 60 Jewish families in Pittsburgh in 1858 were too few to support two religious bodies adequately. Compromising their differences, the rival congregations reunited in the early autumn of 1860, so that construction of a new synagogue building could properly be financed. Rodef Shalom was chosen as the name since it had been chartered in court. In 12 years of existence, Shaare Shamayim had never procured such a charter. Despite the ethnic variety within the reunited synagogue, an observer wrote, "There is prevailing a good spirit among all members."  

The Jewish community of Pittsburgh was a partnership of people from several regions of Europe. Neither Bavarians nor Posener set the tone or "ruled the roost." A member of each representative grouping was given a chance to be president of the synagogue, culminating with the election of William Frank, a Bavarian, in 1861.  

During the 1860's, the ethnic background of the new Jews in Pittsburgh would change considerably. A colony of Dutch Jews and the first Galicians (Austrian-Poles) arrived. More of the Germans would emanate from Prussia instead of southern Germany. The Lithuanians emerged in larger numbers; whereas their major earlier representatives—the Finks, the Silvermans, and Hershberg—had been from Vilna Province, the newcomers began to emanate primarily from Kovno and Suwalk provinces along the German border and sometimes from Grodno province.  

Until 1861, the great majority of Jews in Pittsburgh had

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16 Feldman, op. cit., p. 18; Minutes, Tree of Life Congregation of Pittsburgh, April, 1858, and April, 1860 (These are merely membership lists of Shaare Shamayim).  
17 Israelite, Jan. 15, 1858, p. 222; Aug. 10, 1860, p. 46; Occident, Nov., 1860, p. 113.  
18 Pittsburgh Dispatch, March 21, 1862, p. 3.  
been German citizens. A few of them were Darmstadter or Hamburger; more were Badener, Wurtemberger, or German Prussians; and the largest proportion were Bavarian or Posener. The combination of these four elements from southern Germany, not Bavarians alone, made the original Rodef Shalom congregation a much larger and diversified congregation in the Pittsburgh of 1860 than has been thought. The Jewish pioneers of Pittsburgh reflected the regional diversity of the congregation.
Rosa Sonneschein
(1847-1932)
Early American Jewish feminist, Zionist and founder-editor of the *American Jewess*
Rosa Sonneschein and The American Jewess Revisited: New Historical Information on an Early American Zionist and Jewish Feminist

JACK NUSAN PORTER

In response to my earlier article on Rosa Sonneschein, I have uncovered new information on the life of an almost forgotten American Jewish woman.1 She was an early admirer of Theodor Herzl and thus one of the first American Zionists; she was an early Jewish feminist as well as the founder-editor of The American Jewess (1895-1899);2 and she was one of the most independent and fascinating of women I have encountered in American history. Someday, someone should write a biography or even a novel about her, but as it stands, we have only fragments of her life and her journal to remember. One of her living descendants, David Loth of Boulder, Colorado (born in 1899), a grandson, has sent me material on Rosa’s life, and the material presented here is from my exchanges with him.3

Rosa Sonneschein was born in Hungary on March 12, 1847. Her father, Dr. H.B. Fassel, was a prominent Hungarian rabbi as well as a scientist. She was married at a young age (17 years old) on Oct. 30, 1864, to Rabbi Solomon Hirsch Sonneschein. They had four children: Ben, who was born

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1 See Jack Nusan Porter, “Rosa Sonneschein and The American Jewess: First Independent English Language Jewish Women’s Journal in the United States, American Jewish History, Vol. LXVIII, No. 1 (September, 1978), 57-63. My piece contained a few errors concerning Rosa’s life, including the spelling of her name. I had based my information on two sources, both of which contained wrong information, and this misinformation was passed on in my article as well as in other books and essays dealing with the history of Jewish women in America. The source that should be scrutinized carefully because it contains many errors about Rosa’s life is Anita Libman Lebeson, Recall to Life: The Jewish Women in America (South Brunswick, N.J.: Thomas Yoseloff, 1970), pp. 228-33. Lebeson’s account

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in Prague in 1865, the oldest child; Fanny (David Loth's mother), also born in Prague in 1866; Leontine, the third child, born in 1868 in Prague and left with Rosa's sister in that city until 1870, when she came to America after the Sonnescheins had been in the country for a year; and finally, the youngest child, Monroe, born around 1878 in St. Louis. All the other children were born in Europe. Rosa and her husband came to America in 1869. The youngest son, Monroe, committed suicide in 1923 or 1924, according to Mr. Loth. Ben was alive as late as 1927, but Loth has no knowledge of his year of death. Fanny lived until 1953 and died in old age at 86. Both daughters survived Rosa's death in 1932, and Mr. Loth assumes that Ben did so as well. Monroe died eight or nine years before his mother.

As Loth points out in his long quote, the marriage was disastrous from the start. The quarrels between Rosa and her husband had nothing to do with differences over Zionism and Reform Judaism. (He maintained a strong anti-Zionist perspective, not unusual for Reform rabbis at the time.) The real reason for their quarrels was complete incompatibility.

The abuse Rosa took plus other problems led her to leave him in September, 1891, and to a final divorce in January, 1893. She was 46 years old at the time. He remarried later; she did not. He went on to assume a pulpit position in Des Moines, Iowa (Temple B'nai Yeshurun) afterwards, and eventually died on October 3, 1908.

is based on the research of Jacob Zausmer, Be-ikve ha-dor (New York: 1957), in the section on American observers and delegates to the First Zionist Congress in 1897. The basic errors included the issue of the Sonneschein children (when they died — before or after the parents) and the reason for the divorce between Rabbi Solomon and Rosa Sonneschein. My information corrects both the Lebeson/Zausmer books as well as my own article in American Jewish History. It is based, by and large, on the word of David Loth, Rosa Sonneschein's grandson. His knowledge is based on actual discussions with Ms. Sonneschein, hence his veracity seems quite strong.

Copies of this rare journal can be found in Brandeis University library. It lasted from April, 1895, to August, 1899, only four years, before she gave up ownership. She had sold it before it ceased publication, but remained on as editor.

Much of the new material on Rosa Sonneschein in this article is from correspondence with Mr. Loth, especially the long quote from his letters. His earliest memories of her date from 1904 in St. Louis where she lived with her daughter (Mr. Loth's mother) on and off for about eleven or twelve years. Mr. Loth's family moved to Chicago, and he saw her on every vacation he had from the University of Missouri (where he went to school) from 1917-1920 and on every subsequent visit to St. Louis from then until 1930. Rosa died in St. Louis in 1932.
The American Jewess was started because Rosa Sonneschein needed some form of income. The journal was an important contribution to both Jewish and Zionist affairs, and such European thinkers as Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau gained their first American audiences in the pages of Rosa Sonneschein's journal. She had been introduced to Herzl well before the First Zionist Congress by her nephew Berthold Frischauer. She thought Herzl "inspiring" and was pleasantly surprised that such a polished boulevardier-type should be the Zionist leader. Nordau also impressed her. As it was, Rosa was a delegate to the first congress in Basle in 1897, and her picture can be seen on the official photograph of the delegates. By 1898, there was a strong Zionist presence in America. In July of that year, two Zionist organizations in New York City merged to form the Federation of American Zionists (FAZ) under the presidency of Richard Gottheil, with Stephen S. Wise as secretary. Rosa Sonneschein and her journal were active in the swirl of political and cultural events of those days.


Solomon H. Sonneschein was an American rabbi, born in Szent Marton (St. Martin) Turocz, Hungary, June 24, 1839. Educated in Moravia and later in Hamburg and the University of Jena (Ph.D., 1864), he came to America and assumed pulpits in New York, St. Louis, and Des Moines, Iowa. He was the son of Moses Sonneschein and Charlotte Jassinger. From 1886-1888, he was vice-president of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections in the United States, and he contributed to many German and English periodicals as writer and editor for over forty years.

* Her only mention in the Encyclopedia Judaica is in reference to this picture, where she is seen on the bottom row (seemingly the "women's row"), seventh from the left.

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The journal lasted only four years and that may be one reason why it has been overlooked by most American historians interested in Zionism. The journal died for financial reasons but there may have been a more tragic reason: Rosa Sonneschein was losing her hearing toward the last years of *The American Jewess* and within a few years after its demise, she was quite deaf. Conversation of the sort this vibrant woman was used to and had thrived on was now impossible. According to her grandson, Mr. Loth, verbal and written exchanges with others had been the prime inspiration of her writing. Deprived of them, her pen ran dry, and she is little heard from again after 1900 until her death, thirty-two years later.

**David Loth — Reminiscences**

The following are more vignettes from her life by David Loth.

What was GM like as a person? She was a wonderfully charming woman, a great story-teller and an entertaining if sometimes acid commentator on people and events, parochial or global. Although by the time I knew her, deafness had shut her off from conversation such as she had enjoyed in her prime, the give and take of a group, she could still converse with an individual although one had to talk directly at her, enunciate clearly and sometimes speak into a sort of trumpet-like hearing aid which she hated to use. She had great beauty and vivacity still; I remember that my mother resented not so much that people took GM for her sister, but for her younger sister. This was when we lived in St. Louis and GM would have been in her late fifties (my mother was 19 years younger and said so.) GM went out a lot to visit friends, but not so much to theaters, concerts and lectures standing between Clara Shapira of Heidelberg, Germany, and Rachel Alkalai of Belgrade, Yugoslavia. See Volume 16, under the heading of “Zionist Congresses,” pages 1165-66. *The American Jewess* is not mentioned at all in the 1971 encyclopedia.

Rosa Sonneschein is not mentioned in any encyclopedia prior to the 1971 *Encyclopedia Judaica* even in places where her husband is mentioned (see footnote 4). However, in the *Dictionary Catalog of the Klau Library*, Vol. 24, mentioned above, on page 175, there are three cards on her. One is a short speech: *The Pioneers: An Historical Essay*, read before the Society of Pioneers, May 18, 1880 (St. Louis: Woodward, Tiernan, and Hale, 1880), 16 pages long. The other two cards show holdings of *The American Jewess*, volumes 1-4, 6-9, Chicago, 1895-1899; volumes 4-6, New York, with several volumes incomplete. Thus, the Hebrew Union College Klau Library as well as the Brandeis Library have incomplete sets of the journal. I have found no other books or articles written by her that did not appear in the journal.

* Loth writes that he called Rosa Sonneschein “G.M.” because she didn’t like to seem as old as “grandma” implies.
as once she had. I recall as a six-year-old hearing rumors of men admirers. She and her husband met when she was visiting her older sister in Worasdin where Sonneschein had his first synagogue, and they lived there briefly after their marriage, before he got a congregation in Prague. She told my mother that they came to America in the hope that he would drink less here!

I believe many of the contacts that helped her in Europe as a journalist were through two nephews who were only a few years younger than she and were devoted to her. Berthold Frischauer was a top member of the staff of the *Neue Freie Presse* and a friend of Crown Prince Rudolph. GM went to visit her family nearly every year, and the nephews made much of her. Emil Frischauer was a prominent lawyer and man of business for the Emperor's mistress, the actress, Katerina von Kiss Schratt. Berthold, she once told me, introduced her to Herzl, a fellow journalist.

As a young matron in St. Louis, she was a dashing figure, one of the few women who brought new clothes from Europe every year, and she always had a coterie of young male admirers...

As to marital discord: GM talked to me about her marriage twice. Both times I was grown up. The first was about her husband's remarriage. Apropos of what I no longer remember, she told me that she had called upon Sonneschein's new bride to give her good advice about how to handle the man. GM was obviously pleased that she was better looking and better dressed than the new wife, and also that the new wife accepted her advice to flatter the Rabbi always and admire him openly, with seeming gratitude. GM told me she herself had never done this; she would tell her husband when he asked her opinion of a sermon or an article how much better her father would have put it. She ended by saying that perhaps she was as bad for him as he for her. The second mention of her marriage came when she was telling me what a lovely, spoiled childhood she had as the youngest of (I think) nine children by two wives and the favorite of a plain childless third wife. She said she was much indulged by everyone. As proof, she said her father even allowed her to reject the first two men to whom he wanted to betroth her. But after the second, he told her that this would have to be the end. She was almost 17 and they could not have her an old maid, so the third one she would have to accept. "The third one was your grandfather," she said in effect, "and was much the worst of the three."

However, I heard plenty about the unhappiness of the marriage from my parents. Fanny (his mother) described him often as a drunkard and a savage who beat his children with a cane when in his cups (although she doubted he ever struck his wife.) He was also a lecher in her opinion, although in her own old age she excused him a little on the ground that his wife rejected him sexually as well as intellectually. She told me she had heard him once cry out at GM: "If I could find the man who would arouse you, I'd bring him in off the streets." The divorce, however, did not take place until all the children were grown and after my mother's marriage in 1891. As my mother got the story from GM, she told him she wanted a divorce but if she got it on grounds of adultery and cruelty, as she could, it would ruin
him. So she was willing to let him get it if she picked the grounds. The grounds she selected were "refusal to cohabit." According to my mother, he balked; he would not go into court and admit there was a woman who refused to sleep with him. But a desire to keep his very good job overcame pride, and he yielded. As the defendant, she got no alimony and I always understood that she launched *The American Jewess* partly because she had to earn a living.

To what extent other differences contributed to discord, I do not know. I gather Sonneschein was anti-Zionist and abandoned the old Sabbath observances. Of course she was just the opposite, as you can see in her magazine. She was still an interested Zionist when I came back from an assignment in 1925 to find out what the Jews were doing in Palestine. It was for *The New York World*, of which I was then cable editor, and I saw her in St. Louis early in 1926 and she of course wanted to know all about it. She was glad to hear of successes I could report but was distressed by the opposition of Arabs. Just how far her generation of Zionists had anticipated that was not at all clear then, but I remember she did express a wish (perhaps only of the moment) that Jews could have selected some uninhabited part of the world for their new homeland.

As to Sabbath observance, she did not do it when she lived with us, perhaps out of respect for the fact that my parents did not, although it would not have been like her to submit without complaint. It never bothered her to light up her little after-dinner cigars on Friday evening, and she was the only smoker in the household. She did not like cigarettes but was very fond of the very small cigars — her brand was appropriately named "Between the Acts" because they lasted just about an intermission. She had begun to smoke, she said, on the advice of her doctor many years before I was born. He told her if she smoked after each meal it would prevent the attacks of indigestion she suffered because of quarreling while eating. By the time I knew her, she did not need them for that reason, but she never in my experience let a meal go by without smoking afterwards and sometimes in between the meals. She spoke of her cigar as "my consolation."

Even in her lonely and far from affluent old age, she did not live in the past. She was intensely interested always in world events, and she was a keen commentator on them. She would reminisce only in answer to a direct question unless an experience of earlier days had relevant application to something that was going on today. She did not talk much about her own journalistic career, but she gave me a lot of good advice about mine when at age 15 I had decided to go to the University of Missouri and become a journalist. She urged me to study history, literature, and economics, keep abreast of all advances in science, industry, scholarship and the arts, and learn to listen.

She often said that she had little if any maternal feeling and that babies especially bored her. She said without apology that she supposed she had not been a good mother, except perhaps for her youngest, who obviously was her favorite. I have heard both her daughters recalling how rejected
they felt because they were not allowed to approach their beautiful mother lest they soil her dress or imprint too wet a kiss upon her cheek.

I have no information about the source of her income. She once mentioned as an aside on some industrial discussion that she had been one of the first shareholders of U.S. Steel. Somewhere I got the impression that well before the First World War she had bought an annuity. Whatever it was, at the end it barely sufficed to keep her in a rather shabby room in an old hotel on Lindell Ave. in St. Louis.¹

Despite her personal tragedies and social obstacles, I hope historians will agree with me that Rosa Sonneschein should be regarded as an important figure in American Jewish history not only as a writer-editor on Jewish women’s issues but also as a pioneer in early American political Zionism. *The American Jewess* was more than just a woman’s magazine, one of the first to spread the Zionist message of Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau to United States audiences.

¹ It must be emphasized that this letter is based on what Loth’s parents told him as well as conversations with Rosa Sonneschein herself. Some of the provocative statements may be hearsay and should be checked for reliability; but most of it seems correct and I have no reason to doubt its veracity.
The intention of creating a Jewish Archives in Brazil dates back to the 1950's when two institutions were formed which, on the whole, had the same goals as the present Brazilian Jewish Historical Archives. The first of these institutions, the Brazilian Jewish Institute for Historical Research, had its start in Rio de Janeiro. The well-known American historical researcher Arnold Wiznitzer spent some time there, studying the history of the Jew in colonial Brazil. He also published his papers in the magazine *Aonde Vamos?* The Institute did not survive his departure.

The other institution, which had its start in Belo Horizonte at about the same time, was called the Brazilian Israelite Historical Archives. The person most closely attached to it was also an important historical researcher named Isaias Golgher, whose main work is concerned with Brazilian history, especially with Minas Gerais. These two institutions did not last very long, since the enthusiasm of their founders, who were respected scholars, was supported neither by a professionally and intellectually competent group nor by the public and the community at large.

In 1969, when the Center for Jewish Studies was formed at the University São Paulo, among the departments planned was a documentation center where all kinds of research material would be kept for use by professors and students of the University. The documentation center, however, never materialized. In 1975, another project was presented to the Technical Commission of the Jewish Studies Center: a proposal for a historical archives with broader aims than the documentation center and one independent of the University.

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There were various reasons why we proposed the creation of an institution completely independent from the University. In the first place, the Archives was to possess a legal identity of its own, so that it would be eligible for financial support from private foundations and other institutions. If it were declared by the government to be in the public interest, such support would be more readily obtainable. Then, its institutional independence would arouse greater enthusiasm among its participants and would attract people who did not belong to the University. Finally, the specific material the Archives was meant to preserve — that is, material reflecting the Jewish experience in Brazilian localities — would not be deposited in the Archives unless the institution was clearly a sound one devoted to the welfare of the community — a circumstance which is usual in university institutions.

Only recently, however, was it found possible to implement the project. With the increasing number of historical studies underway in Brazil, many scholars and researchers took an interest in the Brazilian Jewish community and in the role played by Jews in the evolution of Brazilian society. Nowadays many dissertations and theses probe various aspects of the subject. This fact, added to others, underscores the need for a center where scholars would be able to find, systematically organized, the sources necessary for their research. Other countries have long supported institutions which preserve basic documents and which have widened considerably the range of historical investigations thereby enabling whole generations to become more conversant with past as well as present experience, and with the local as well as international history of the Jewish people.

We can find such institutions not only in the United States, where they are of great importance and are a source of pride for all the scholars interested in contributing to the illumination of Jewish history, but also in France, England and other countries, not to mention Israel, which is becoming the major center for the documentation of Jewish history.

Thus, it is clear that the Brazilian Jewish Historical Archives came into being not only as a result of local scientific need but also in order to complement, within its limits, the group of institutions which have taken on themselves the task of preserving vital information about everything con-
cerned with Jewish life. It is even more urgent to undertake this kind of work in Brazil because up to now "old papers," either personal or institutional, have been simply thrown away; precious documents, evidence, and even whole chapters of community history have disappeared in this way.

The Archives, aiming to put a stop to this loss and to salvage as much as possible of the remaining data, proposes:

a to organize and maintain an archives which will preserve all types of material: photographs, periodicals, newspapers, diaries, letters, personal papers, official papers, etc. (for this purpose, a number of special sections will be created: one for photographs, one for periodicals, one for oral history, and so on);

b to provide researchers with relevant data on the history and life of the Jewish people in Brazil; and,

c to contact native and foreign researchers and institutions with similar purposes in order to exchange information and thus enrich the collections and provide researchers with additional data.

Founding such an institution has not been easy and has called for widespread community support. The support has been forthcoming from the very beginning and has been a great incentive to our work. However, the growing awareness that the Archives is an important effort must be translated into material support from the community's responsible agencies.

After drawing up the bylaws and determining the governing body and the aims of the institution, we planned the first research projects:

1 Colonial period — New Christians
2 The Jews in Recife during the Dutch Rule
3 Imperial period
   a immigration from Morocco
   b immigration from Alsace-Lorraine
4 Immigration during the Republican period
   a the settlement of Jews in the South through the JCA
   b immigration and its origins between two World Wars; social welfare;
     early patterns of communal organization; the verbaende and cultural
     activities
   c industry, commerce, science, culture: Jewish contributions
   d Sephardic immigration from the Levant between the two World Wars
   e immigration following the Second World War
5 Recent immigration:
   a from the Arab world
   b from South American countries
As far as a survey of sources is concerned, we propose to work along the following lines: I - graveyards; II - newspapers and periodicals; III - archives of institutions which have preserved relevant documents; IV - the recording of oral interviews to provide material for the oral history section. We are ready now to detail each of these four items.

I - Graveyards:

a the survey of graveyards is important because of the inscriptions on tombstones and also the form and decoration of the tombstones themselves. The tombstone survey must be accompanied by a search of graveyards registries. In the main, the graveyards are for the general public, but there are a few which are communal.

b The important graveyards for this survey are:

1 Rio de Janeiro
   a São Francisco Xavier
   b Cemitério dos Ingleses
   c Nilópolis - communal
   d São João Batista
   e Vila Rosaly - Orthodox
   f Caju - communal
   g Petrópolis
   h Rezende and others

2 São Paulo
   a Consolação
   b Araçá
   c Santo Amaro
   d Protestantes
   e Franca
   f Campinas and others

3 Other Brazilian states:
   a Belo Horizonte
   b Curitiba
   c Porto Alegre
   d Pelotas
   e Livramento
   f Belém
   g Manaus
   h Macapá
   i Corumbá, Cuiabá and others

II - Newspapers - We must investigate newspaper collections for the various historical periods under consideration, either in the central public libraries of the main cities or the university libraries and private collections in order to take notes of every news item about or reference to Jews.
III - Other Archives

a Jewish Institutions: To consult the local Jewish federations which are able to provide us with a list of societies significant for our research, whether they are philanthropic, social, cultural, sports, political, or other, so long as they are community-oriented.

b official institutions: 1 - local notaries public and registry offices: wills; the buying and selling of real estate; business contracts; birth certificates; marriage certificates; naturalization papers.
   2 local courts of justice: lawsuits

c Municipal, state and national archives

d Customs and port archives

IV - Oral testimonies: of famous and aged people who are able to tell about some aspects of the activities pursued by the institutions to which they have belonged.

To be able to go on with these various projects, we need a group of rather idealistic scholars because of the amount of scientific as well as material effort involved.

As far as we can see, there is an urgent need in other South American countries for the creation of Jewish archives similar to the one we have created in Brazil. The lack of a local Jewish historical consciousness in Latin America leads to a failure to recognize the importance of most communal institutional documents and to the likelihood of their disappearance. We hope to see this warning seriously taken before it is too late. On the other hand, we condemn the idea advanced by some foreign archivist circles that it is impossible to organize Jewish archives in South America and that the documents should be removed to "more important" places. As a consequence of this feeling, some collections, including Brazilian ones, were partially ransacked by such "archivists," who did not realize that they were making off with fragments of the collections — which thus became incomplete and harmed researchers everywhere. Fortunately, if belatedly, the idea has been emerging that knowledge or consciousness of local community history — possible only if we preserve its evidence — is a form of identification with traditional Jewish values.
When in 1973 I decided to trace my husband's family beyond the 1758 date then known to us, I had no idea how that undertaking would affect my life. After a while I found myself with a new profession. I became a serious genealogist.

I had never had any experience in tracing family trees and was a neophyte when I plunged headlong into the sea of details. Little did I know how vast that sea would be or how long would be the voyage or where it would lead.

**Beginning The Search**

I began by contacting as many members of the family as I could, in order to obtain all the details and bits of information — even hearsay — they might be able to furnish. I got in touch with men and women who were born Plauts and people whose mother, grandmother or great-grandmother was the last to bear that name. They as well as women who married into the family often were very knowledgeable about relationships and data. I found that older people, including 80-90 year olds, were excellent correspondents with great funds of information.

Cemetery records often give helpful information, and gravestones frequently have inscribed upon them the date and place of birth as well as the Hebrew name of the deceased.

There is also the important job of reading and researching records wherever they can be found. Such records exist for German Jews and go back into the early 1800's or before.

In order to obtain some data on the earliest ancestor about whom we knew, I felt it imperative to trace his descendants.
in as complete detail as possible. One of these distant cousins might well hold a key to the search.

The fact that the family came from Germany made the quest somewhat easier. When German Jews are searching for their family, the city registry is often most helpful. Thus, when I wrote to Detmold that I was searching for data about the family, the registrar supplied me with the address of the widow of one of the relatives. She in turn forwarded my inquiry to her 85-year-old sister-in-law who became a great source of information.

I began inquiring about Plauts who might or might not be part of our family. In doing this, I expanded my field of investigation. I found some Plauts who had traditions of being related to our family "way back," but didn't know how. I worked on their trees hoping to find a common ancestor. I included additional families, and little by little my trees grew in size and number. Soon I had Plauts everywhere in the world as my field of research. My investigations circled the globe: South America, Central America, North America, Europe, England, Israel, Australia, China, Japan. The world became my field for collating Plaut data.

As I probed, searched and investigated, I obtained some fascinating information about the family and about other Jews as well.

**Jews And Family Names**

Most Jews had no family name before the 1810's. They were known by their given name and that of the father: Moshe ben Yitzchak was Moses son of Isaac; Shmuel ben Avraham was Samuel son of Abraham; Rivka bat Yitzchak was Rebecca daughter of Isaac. With no last name for the family, continuity could be ascertained only if one traced son to father and that father to *his* father and so on. This was most laborious, especially if the records were not specific or if the family moved from one city to another.

When, around the time of Napoleon, Jews took or were given last names in Germany, some took the name of the city in which they lived (becoming Dessauer, Wiener, Frankfurter, Wormser), or the name of trades (Schneider, Metzger, Fenstermacher, Kaufmann), or names of colours (Schwartz, Grün, Blau, Gelb). Others took the name of the house-sign
of the place they inhabited (Rothschild, Windmüller, Adler, Strauss). Many used their Hebrew names, placing the German word for son after the given name of the father and thus Moses son of Isaac became Moses Isaacsohn.

Some Jews translated the Hebrew name into a type of vernacular; both Menachem and Mordecai might become Marx, and one gentleman, Moshe Aus Küps (Moses from the city of Küps), took the first letter of his name and the city from which he came and made the acronym Mak or Mack out of it.* (Other Jews took the name Mack for a different reason.) In some cases one brother took one last name and another sibling chose a different one, so that their blood lines were confused by their descendents having different surnames, as in the case of the above mentioned Mak (Mack). His brother took the name Rauh. It should be remembered, however, that people who had the same surname were not necessarily relatives.

**Records That Help**

Birth, death, and marriage records of a large number of German cities are available. There are also synagogue records extant as well as registries of families in which the father is listed with his wife and all children living with him. Included in these records are the date and place of birth for each person. With German thoroughness the marriage records list the bride’s and groom’s name and place of birth, as well as birth places of each parent (including maiden names of the women). In many cases the records show the exact birth dates of the couple being married, and in some exceptional cases even the dates of birth of both sets of parents.

Birth records usually list the complete data on the parents of the newborn; death records generally give the age of the deceased, often listing it in years, months and days, or record the date of birth. In the case of a child or unmarried person, sometimes one even 50 years old or older, the names of parents including their parents’ names and maiden names of the mothers are noted.

Birth, death, marriage records act as cross references. By

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*This had a well established Hebrew precedent: thus Katz was an acronym for Kohen Tzedek.
comparing the age and parents of the groom with the birth record of a child whose parents have the same name, one can determine if the names refer to the same person. This is of utmost importance, because there were frequently in the same city several grandchildren named after the same grandfather. Thus in Schenklengsfeld, Hirsch Plaut’s five sons each named a child after the grandfather. There were Hirsch Plauts born in 1835 (father Jacob), in 1838 (father Juda), in 1840 (father Joseph), in 1842 (father Baruch) and in 1845 (father Meyer). Thus a son born to a Hirsch Plaut does not identify who the grandfather was, until one checks the date of birth of the child’s father or the name of the grandfather.

Where a family name existed, the given name of the father usually became the middle name of the son or daughter. Thus we find Isaac Abraham Plaut with his sister Rebecca Abraham Plaut.* This custom helps the researcher in determining family relationships. Care must be used, however, to determine that similar names do indeed belong to the same person.

The Name Plaut

The name Plaut appeared in Germany long before the Jews had to take family names, and may be found in records (especially tombstones) as early as in the 1600’s. In all the records I have seen (and they include birth, death, marriage records as well as synagogue registries etc. for over 60 cities — most in Hessen) the name Plaut is listed as the last name for members of the family. It is easily discernible even in what are very poorly handwritten records in frequently almost undecipherable German script.

The grave of Menachem ben Ruben who was buried in 1645 in the Altona cemetery, bears the earliest date I have found when the name Plaut was used.

Joseph Plaut from Witzenhausen visited the Leipzig Fair in 1677 as did Victor Plaut from Sontra in 1691 and again in 1692.

Jac Hartig Plaut, Jac Is. Plaut, and Simon Is Plaut were living in Wandsbeck in 1734. Hamburg had a Mordecai

*This represents the Jewish custom of the father’s name being part of the child’s name, only the word “bar” or “bat” was omitted.
Gumpel Plaut who died “a very old man” in 1750.* He was the son of Joseph Plaut.

In Ottrau a business transaction in 1738 was arranged between Solomon Plaut, another Jew and their non-Jewish neighbors.

The Rauschenberg birth records 1770-1876 tell us that Simon Plaut was born in 1780 to Michael Plaut and his wife Sara. Most of the other families recorded at that time had no family names.

Variations in the Spelling of Plaut

The name Plaut is recorded in various hands and in various spellings: Plauth, Blaut, Blauth and even Blaud. In nineteenth century Germany the “t” was often followed by a (silent) “h” as in the case of Blauth, Plauth.

The change from “P” to a “B” (and a “t” to a “d”) was due to dialectic pronunciation in Hessen where the explosive “P” and “T” were softened to “B” and “D”. In Nordhausen in 1835, where 18-year-old Levy Blaut died, it was noted that “the other brother was Plaut, Jehudah”. In Frankershau- sen the name appears on the same family tree as Blauth, Blaut, and Plaut.

My husband’s grandfather who died in 1891 is buried in the cemetery in Merzhausen as Moses Blaud, although he and all his ancestors and descendents were recorded officially as “Plaut”. Evidently the stone cutter heard “Blaud” when he was given his commission. Moses’ wife is buried as Plaut.

Isaac Blout (died 1916) and his brother Henry (died 1904) are buried in Washington, D.C. A granddaughter of one of the brothers remembers a wedding ring of her grandmother’s with the letter “P” on it, and it is believed that the family which in the mid-1800’s was living in Alexandria, Virginia, changed the “P” for a “B” at that time. The spelling was changed then from Blaut to Blout in order to retain the German pronunciation.

The Hebrew Spelling of Plaut

In traditional Hebrew, names are written without vocaliza-
At one time the name Plaut could have been written [PLT]. Such was the way a 12th-century scholar Joseph ibn Plat usually transcribed his name. He died in Lunel, France, in 1190 and was a well-known scholar of that time. But in writing about him, his contemporaries wrote not only [Plaut], [Plat] and also [Plit]. How the name was vocalized in the local French language is not known.

In 1245 there was in France another scholar, Rabbi Shem Tov Plat, בָּשָׁם in Hebrew.

In France today there are Plaut families who trace their families back in that country for several generations.

Joseph ibn Plat and his son Solomon spent some years in Italy. It is believed by some that the name became Plautus and then the ending "us" was dropped when the family emigrated. It then reverted to the original root but maintained the "au" (א) sound and was written in the vernacular as "Plaut". Plaut families that lived in Germany from the 18th to the 20th century generally wrote their names פָּלוֹט, sometimes פָּלוֹט and occasionally פָּלוֹט.

The name פָּלוֹט, in the 12th century, could have been vocalized in various ways. It is postulated that the name Bolat is derived from Plat, and a family Bolat living in Switzerland today (and joined in marriage to a Plaut family) has a tradition that Bolat and Plaut are one and the same name.*

Changes in the Name Plaut

In the 19th century, in a few German villages, records show that some changes took place whereby the name Plaut was superseded by another last name.

How does one account for these additions to and later changes away from the name Plaut? Only in a few places does there appear an additional family name. My theory is that when Jews were given or took last names, the authorities discovered that there were some Jews who already had family names which had been handed down for genera-

*It is quite probable that the name Flaut is also Plaut. When my husband and I lived in Israel for a month we were frequently called Flaut until we indicated that the 9 was indeed a ש and not ה. However, I have not branched out into researching Bolat or Flaut families. The name Plaut-Blaut-Blout is a large enough subject to examine.
tions. This did not sit well with the registrars who were not Philo-Semites and forced the Plauts to change their name to a newer one and in time the older family nomenclature was forgotten. Thus in Guxhagen as early as 1810 an Isaac Blaut König was a witness to a legal transaction.

In the Gudensburg marriage records, Nanny Plaut Wolf, from Felsberg, married Moses Levi Elias. In recording the births of her many children she is listed as follows: in 1851, Nanny geb. Plaut; in 1853/4, Nanny Katz; in 1855, Nanny Plaut Hess; and then again Nanny Plaut in 1857-65. Yet there is no change in the name of her husband, the father of her children.

In Felsberg there were many different names added to Plaut: e.g. Seligman Plaut Nagel, Juda Plaut König, Juda Plaut Goldberg, whose descendents omitted “Plaut” from their name.

In Obervorschiitz, Marcus Plaut Löwenstein had three sons each of whom dropped the Löwenstein name and, with their descendents, became Plaut.

Is Plaut a Jewish Name?

Has Plaut always been and has it remained a Jewish name? The answer is “no”. Through intermarriages and conversions, there are and have been Plauts who were not Jewish. The majority of defections from Judaism have occurred from the mid-1800’s into the present, and in cities away from the ancestral family homes.

In Cincinnati, Ohio, in the mid-1800’s there were 3 Plaut families. One was already non-Jewish by the 1860’s or before. In another Plaut family, although there were 13 children born between 1855-1869, the only child who in the 1970’s bears the name of Plaut is a non-Jew whose mother is non-Jewish and whose father converted to Christianity.

One descendent of a Plaut family from Wehrda, Germany, went to Copenhagen at the turn of the 20th century. There he married a Catholic woman; thus his family was non-Jewish and it has remained. A sibling of his who settled in Indiana had a son who married out of the Jewish faith and his descendents are all non-Jews, although they and the Danish family are interested in their Jewish forebears.

When Hitler dispersed German Jewry, they found refuge
in countries throughout the world. Many Jews of that generation married out of the faith. This was true also of Plauts. Thus we find that in various countries there are a number of people bearing that name who are first- and even second-generation non-Jews.

Conversely, there have been Gentiles who became good Jews through conversion, married Plauts, and whose children have remained Jewish.

Does "Plaut" Have Any Meaning?

The meaning of the name Plaut is unclear. Joseph ibn Plat who died in 1190 in Lunel was reputed to have been a Sephardi coming from either North Africa or the Iberian peninsula. When the spelling of his name in Hebrew was פֶּלֶט Plit it could have been read as Palit, "refugee", and several Plaut families hold to that interpretation. That would mean that the name goes back to the migrations of Jews from Spain as early as 1000 or 1100.

Other traditions equate the name with Platt, meaning flat or flat-footed, and one explanation is that it comes from the Latin, meaning a flat short sword.

There is no certainty about the meaning of the name Plaut or its derivation. That it is one of the earliest surnames of Jews in Europe is certain. Even more certain is the challenge that the name holds for the genealogist in search of its origins.
On the Road to Unity:
The Union of American Hebrew Congregations and American Jewry, 1873-1903

STEVEN A. FOX

Physical expansion, technological advancement, and a population explosion contributed to the development of the United States in the nineteenth century. The population explosion especially stimulated the Westward movement of Americans, a movement aided by new and improved means of transportation.¹ Much of the explosion was fueled by immigrants, among whom were European Jews. Although the first Jews in America were Sephardim, they were no longer the majority by 1720. Beginning in the 1820's German immigrants started to reshape the American Jewish community. By 1826, 6,000 Jews lived in America, twice as many as in 1818. This number increased to 15,000 by 1840, and by 1880 the Jewish population of America burgeoned to 250,000. Small Jewish communities grew up around the two largest Jewish centers, New York and Philadelphia, and American Jews followed the Westward migration of the American population, settling and establishing new Jewish communities west of the Appalachians.²

The influx of European Jewish immigrants produced a heterogeneous Jewish population in America. There were


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Spanish and Portuguese Jews, as well as Germans, Bohemians, Dutch, French, Polish, and Russian — each with their own customs and traditions. The divisions in the American Jewish community resulting from these divergent cultures were further exacerbated by the onset of Reform Judaism in America. In 1824 "The Reformed Society of Israelites" was founded as the first Reform congregation in America. Soon Reform congregations grew out of "Reform Vereine," societies formed by people seeking reforms in their Jewish practice. During the mid-nineteenth century Reform Judaism received theology and direction with the arrival from Germany of the most important early leaders of the movement in America: Isaac M. Wise, Max Lilienthal, Samuel Adler, Bernhard Felsenthal, Samuel Hirsch, and David Einhorn.3

At the same time there existed pressing needs in areas such as education and self-defense which could be met only by a united Jewry. The great influx of immigrants, their dispersion throughout the United States, and their cultural and religious divisions all presented obstacles blocking the union of America's Jews. A few individuals grasped the need for union, and these visionaries struggled unsuccessfully to establish an all-embracing organization to promote inner cooperation among the Jews of America: in 1841 Isaac Leeser called for an assembly to meet in Philadelphia; in 1848 Isaac Mayer Wise issued another call for union; in 1855 Wise convened the Cleveland Conference; in 1869 David Einhorn led a conference of rabbis in Philadelphia; in 1870 Wise held meetings in Cleveland and New York. None of these attempts at union were able to satisfy the divergent strains within the American Jewish community, and each failed to unify America's Jews.4

The only issue deemed sufficiently urgent to unite Ameri-

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can Jewry was the need for self-defense and for the protection of civil rights for Jews living in the United States and abroad. Three cases brought this clearly to the attention of American Jews: the Damascus Affair (1840), the Swiss Treaty (1850-1857), and the Mortara Case (1858). Following the Mortara Case, Rabbi Samuel M. Isaacs, of New York, proclaimed that a "united" American Jewry would have been more effective in receiving action from the U.S. government on behalf of Edgar Mortara. Isaacs issued a call to the congregations of America to meet and establish a plan of organization. Under Isaacs' direction the Board of Delegates of American Israelites was created in 1859. The primary activity of the Board of Delegates was the protection of Jewish civil and religious rights; it did little, however, to further the cause of a general union of American Israelites.5

Over the years the need for a national organization to promote Jewish education became more and more apparent. Synagogue schools throughout the country lacked text books, trained teachers, and curriculum. Furthermore, American Jews began to desire American-trained rabbis to serve them and their American-born children. Isaac M. Wise pushed for a Jewish college to train rabbis. In 1855, in Cincinnati, he opened Zion College, which soon became the hobby horse of the Reform Jewish community in Cincinnati, but nowhere else; due to a lack of funds and support Zion College was forced to close its doors in 1857. In 1867 Maimonides College opened in Philadelphia under the leadership of Isaac Leeser. This school also never received the full support of the American Jewish community, officially closing in 1875. Still other, even less successful attempts to establish a college were made; none came to fruition.6

The desire for a Jewish college to train American-born rabbis, the need for educational aids for synagogue schools, and a growing influx of Jewish immigrants to the United States, all contributed to making the 1870's ripe for the establishment of a union of American Jews. Furthermore, many lessons were learned from the unsuccessful attempts

at forming a union and a college. And by the 1870's, no longer just the rabbinic leaders of American Jewry sought a union; even the lay members of congregations throughout the country acknowledged the necessity for a union. All of these factors, plus the perseverance and determination of several individuals, led to the founding of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (hereafter referred to as the UAHC).

PART I:
THE ESTABLISHMENT, GROWTH, AND STRUCTURE
OF THE UNION

The Founding of the Union

Moritz Loth, a prosperous Cincinnati merchant, was president of Isaac M. Wise's Bene Yeshurun Congregation at its annual meeting on October 10, 1872. In the Annual Report of the President, Loth spoke of the great need of American Jews to have American-trained rabbis to teach, preach, and spread Judaism within America. To educate these rabbis Loth declared that a Jewish theological faculty was necessary, and he proposed that a committee of twelve members from each Cincinnati congregation meet to consider calling a conference of all congregations in the West, South, and North-West to form a union of congregations. The goals of this union, in Loth's opinion, were threefold: to establish a Jewish theological faculty, to publish books for Sabbath-schools, and to stem the tide of the radical reformers in America. The members of Bene Yeshurun unanimously approved Loth's recommendations and appointed twelve representatives to sit down with the other congregations of their city.  

At the February 13, 1873, meeting of the Board of Trustees of Bene Yeshurun a letter was read from Henry Adler, who in 1873 had told Isaac M. Wise that he wanted to do something for Judaism and was willing to donate $10,000 for that purpose. Wise had suggested that Adler donate the
Moritz Loth
(1832-1913)

Cincinnati merchant, one of the main founders of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and its first President.
1873-1889
money for the founding of a rabbinical college.8 Adler's letter to the Board of Trustees announced his belief in the necessity of a Jewish theological faculty and his willingness to donate $10,000 to endow such a college. This donation, to be held in trust by Bene Yeshurun Congregation until three or more congregations organized a college, had one significant stipulation — the Jewish theological faculty would have to be organized within three years or the entire sum of money would have to be returned to Adler. Adler's donation, with its three-year proviso, lent impetus to the establishment of the UAHC, which, in turn, would lay the foundation for a rabbinical college.9

By March 24, 1873, each Cincinnati congregation had appointed twelve representatives to participate in a conference committee to form a union of congregations. This conference committee agreed to call for a convention of all the congregations in the South, West, and North-West. By June 17, 1873, following several meetings, the "Call for a General Convention and a Plan of Organization" had been issued, a committee was appointed to make arrangements for the delegates in Cincinnati, and the Conference Committee adjourned sine die.10

The Call for a Convention was addressed to the presidents and members of congregations and was published in The Israelite and The Deborah to reach those congregations whose names and addresses were not available. The Call claimed that suitable agencies and a Jewish theological institute were required in America to promote Jewish education and to keep alive the eternal principles of Judaism. It further explained that in recognizing the need for united action to educate American Jewish youth for the ministry, the congregations of Cincinnati had resolved to call a congregational convention of all congregations in the West and South to form a so-called Union of Congregations. The "Plan of Organization," appended to the Call, outlined the major objectives of the Convention: the formation of a Union of Congregations; the adoption of a preamble, constitution, and bylaws; the election of officers; the adoption of other mea-

8 UAHC, 1:v-xi.
9 Ibid., 1:vii-xiii.
10 Ibid., 1:3-5.
sures beneficial to the interests of Jewish education and to the prosperity of American Jewish congregations.  

Ninety-seven delegates representing thirty-four congregations gathered at Melodeon Hall in Cincinnati on Tuesday, July 8, 1873, for the General Convention of Congregations.  
The administration necessary to begin the work of the convention was quickly completed. After the delegates had been registered, their officers elected, and rules for procedure adopted, they were ready to form a Union of Congregations. The delegates unanimously adopted the following resolution:

"Resolved, That the congregations represented in this Convention, in pursuance of the call issued to them, now form themselves into a 'Union' to carry out the purposes in said call named, and that a committee of ten be now appointed by the chair to draft a Preamble, Constitution, and Bylaws, as contemplated by the plan of organization appended to said call."  

During the next two days the appointed committee prepared the preamble, Constitution, and bylaws, which were unanimously declared to be in full force on July 10, 1873. The first article of the Constitution set forth the name of the organization:

Article I. — The body hereby constituted and established shall be known as 'The Union of American Hebrew Congregations.'  
The name of this new organization was probably carefully chosen. The word "Union" had certain connotations in the 1870's. The Civil War had recently been fought to preserve the "Union," and with the Northern victory the "Union" was intact. Furthermore the term implied the American Jews' need for Union — to act in united action for the advancement and preservation of Judaism in America. Moreover, as will be seen below, the term "Union" did not mean "uniformity" but rather "unity." The word "Hebrew" was chosen over the term "Jewish" possibly for several reasons. First, it avoided the negative nuances of the word "Jew" which to Gentiles implied usury or anti-Christianity. The word "He-

11 Ibid., 1:7-9.
12 Ibid., 1:11.
13 Ibid., 1:22.
brew" also alluded to the ancient Hebrews of the Bible.\textsuperscript{15} The objects of the UAHC as set forth in Article II of the Constitution were fourfold:

1. To establish a Hebrew theological institute
2. To advance the standard of Sabbath-school instruction
3. To aid young congregations
4. To establish and maintain other institutions for the welfare and progress of Judaism.\textsuperscript{16}

The rest of the Constitution and bylaws contained the rules and regulations governing membership, Council meetings, officers, and other administrative details of the UAHC. A resolution was approved asking all delegates to urge their congregations to ratify the Constitution and bylaws within ninety days and to begin raising funds for the UAHC and for the college.\textsuperscript{17}

The primary goal of the Convention was accomplished: the founding of the UAHC and the adoption of its constitution and bylaws.

"A New Chapter in the History of the American Israel" was the title of The American Israelite's lead article on July 18, 1873; the article joyfully greeted the establishment of the UAHC. The article pointed out that the new Union hoped to accomplish through united efforts what individuals or isolated congregations could not accomplish because of lack of means or influence. The American Israelite, edited by Isaac M. Wise, continually praised the new Union, advocating its cause and advancing its interests.\textsuperscript{18} Wise also called upon the entire American Jewish press to join together in support of the UAHC. A number of Jewish papers, however, spoke out against the UAHC. On July 18, 1873, an article appeared in The Jewish Messenger (New York) saying that "primarily this proposed union is disunion" because the Board of Delegates of American Israelites (BDAI) already existed. If the scope of the UAHC would be limited to improving the system of Hebrew instruction, the article continued, The Jewish Messenger would support the Union. But The Jewish

\textsuperscript{16} PUHAC, 1:22-23.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 1:19.
\textsuperscript{18} Israelite, 18 July 1873; see also 8 August 1873, 24 October 1873.
\textsuperscript{19} The Jewish Messenger, 18 July 1873. The Jewish Messenger, edited by Samuel Isaacs, continually supported the BDAI.
Messenger feared that the UAHC would “undertake to deride and to disturb rather than to unite and harmonize.” On August 29, 1873, the newspaper again attacked the new union and restated its belief that the BDAI already served as the potential foundation for a Union of American Israelites:

“We are confident that the Board of Delegates will welcome as accession the twenty or more congregations represented at Cincinnati. We believe it is still possible to arrange that the next session of the Board shall be held at some convenient city where Western congregations can be fully and thoroughly represented by delegates. The hasty work of organization at Cincinnati can then be gracefully abandoned, and the solid foundation erected of cooperative educational movement among American Israelites.”

Other publications joined in the debate over the UAHC. The Jewish Times (New York) denounced the Union, while The Hebrew Observer (San Francisco) spoke out in favor of it. Within congregations, rabbis and congregants argued whether or not to join the Union. Rabbis such as David Einhorn, Samuel Adler, Gustav Gottheil, Samuel Hirsch, Marcus Jastrow, and Kaufmann Kohler opposed the UAHC.

When the First Annual Session of the Council met in Cleveland on July 14, 1874, eighty-seven delegates represented fifty-six congregations which had joined the UAHC and included Jews from seventeen states, primarily from the Midwest and South. The only Eastern congregation represented was Temple Beth Zion of Buffalo, New York. While the invitation to attend the Council meeting and to join the Union had been extended to all congregations throughout the U.S., the UAHC began virtually without the participation of the Eastern congregations.

The delegates to the First Council of the UAHC elected as its president Moritz Loth, who had also been chosen as president of the Executive Board during that year (July, 1873-July, 1874). Loth addressed the Council as its first president and then presented his report as president of the Executive Board. In this report Loth spoke of the beneficent

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*The Jewish Messenger*, 29 August 1873. Numerous articles appeared in *The Jewish Messenger* attacking the UAHC. See, for example, 19 September 1873, 25 September 1873, 29 May 1874.

*Jewish Times*, 6 February 1874; and *Hebrew Observer*, 13 March 1874.

*PUAHC*, 1:29-32.
blessings of union, of Israel's mission to the world, and of the need to educate rabbis who would preach the lessons of Judaism to Jews and to all of humanity, who would teach the spirit of the Ten Commandments which lead to "the grand avenue of a correct life and conduct." Most importantly, Loth presented a series of suggestions on issues he felt the Council had to address: circuit preaching activities by rabbis; collecting funds to support the UAHC and the proposed college; assisting orphans and the children of poor parents in learning a mechanical trade; bringing all American congregations into the UAHC; designating where a Hebrew theological institute should be established; and promulgating the rules for its administration. Loth concluded by thanking the press, both Jewish and secular, and the individuals who had labored for the UAHC — "the only National Organization which had for its object the promotion of Hebrew education in America." 23

The Council delegates examined the proceedings of the Executive Board, read financial reports and correspondence received during the year, and appointed standing committees. During the three days of the Council meetings numerous resolutions were passed on issues such as circuit preaching, the publication of English Bibles, Sabbath-schools, finances, means to increase membership, and other administrative details. The most significant action taken by the Council was the establishment of the rabbinical college. On July 16 the Committee on the theological institute proposed the laws, regulations, and provisions under which the college should be established, opened, and maintained. The institution was named the "Hebrew Union College," provisions were set forth for the composition of the Board of Governors, and for the curriculum of the College. The committee further recommended that the Hebrew Union College (HUC) be established and permanently located in Cincinnati, Ohio. The report of the committee was unanimously adopted and HUC was officially declared organized. 24

Throughout the next year (1874-1875) the Jewish press continued to discuss the UAHC. The American Israelite spoke of the great good and blessings of the Union. 25 The Jewish

23 Ibid., 1:34-38.
24 Ibid., 97-98.
25 See, for example, American Israelite, 31 July 1874 and 21 August 1874.
Chronicle (Baltimore) called the UAHC a “laudable enterprise” and further stated:

“The U.A.H.C. is a NECESSITY. — The necessity of unity is so apparent as hardly worth mentioning. — The end to be attained can only be arrived at by a unanimous action of the Israelites in America, and such action can only be had by the union of our congregations into a solid phalanx, presenting an unbroken front in defense of the right. The necessity for Union is demonstrated by every argument to its utility or its laudable character.”

There still remained opposition to the UAHC, as illustrated by an article in the Jewish Times (New York):

“We regret very much the waste of energy, good intention, holy enthusiasm of the majority of the people engaged in infusing life into the Congregational Union. There are good and true men among them; their only fault is to be of too confiding a nature. . . . That much is certain, a union of American congregations with the large, wealthy and benevolent congregations of New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, Baltimore, and New Orleans left out, is the play of Hamlet, without Hamlet . . .”

When the Second Council of the UAHC met on July 13, 1875, the Union had grown to 72 member congregations which sent 94 delegates to the Council. The most significant actions of the Council were once again related to HUC. The Council adopted the Code of Laws for the General Internal Government of HUC, the bylaws for the Board of Governors, and the laws establishing the faculty and curriculum of the College. With the passage of all these measures the College was ready to open its doors.

By the end of 1875 the UAHC was a functioning organization. On October 3, 1875, Hebrew Union College was dedicated. The UAHC had even received the attention of the European Jewish press. The London Jewish Chronicle wrote:

“A movement has been going on for some time in the United States which bids fair to become of considerable importance, but which had as yet not attracted sufficient attention in our country. This movement is the formation of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.”

East and West Unite

Despite repeated attempts by the leadership of the nascent

26 Jewish Chronicle, 12 February 1875.
27 Jewish Times, 4 June 1875.
28 PUH, 1:114-17.
29 Reprinted in the American Israelite, 3 September 1875.
UAHC to make it a truly national organization, representatives of Eastern congregations were conspicuous by their absence. One of the main obstacles preventing a complete union of all American congregations was the Board of Delegates of American Israelites, which was viewed by some as the natural basis for Jewish unity. By July, 1876, however, the BDAI announced the appointment of a three-member committee which would confer with the UAHC to "bring about as speedily as possible a complete Union of all Hebrew Congregations of the United States." The UAHC responded in kind by appointing its own committee to meet with that of the BDAI in order to pave the way for the unification of the two organizations.39

On July 10, 1877, at the Fourth Council of the UAHC, this joint committee recommended that the UAHC assume the functions of the BDAI and that once the UAHC Constitution was amended for that purpose the BDAI cease to exist. Furthermore, the committee urged that the UAHC establish a "Board of Delegates" to perform the functions which had been done by the BDAI.40 During this Fourth Council additional details were agreed upon and adopted by the UAHC on July 11, 1877, e.g., that the function of the UAHC Council would be legislative, not administrative; that the administrative functions of the UAHC would be exercised by the Executive Board; that the New England states would receive an equal representation on the Board; and that as soon as Eastern congregations representing two thousand members and seatholders agreed to join the UAHC, the proposed amendments would be adopted.41

On July 10, 1878, at the Fifth Council of the UAHC, the Committee from the BDAI reported that Eastern congregations representing over 2,000 members had signaled their intention to join the UAHC and that this number would be increased before the next Council meeting.42 On the next day, July 11, 1878, the UAHC Constitution was amended to reflect the expanded scope of the Union now that it had absorbed the BDAI. For example, changes were made in the "Objects of the Union, Article II of the Constitution":

39 *PUAHC*, 1:242-43. The BDAI proposed this union for several possible reasons: the UAHC firmly established itself as a permanent organization by 1876; several Eastern congregations had already joined the UAHC; the BDAI was facing financial difficulties.
40 Ibid., 1:345-48.
41 Ibid., 1:378-81.
42 Ibid., 1:537.
Point "A" included the Union's agreement to found a Preparatory Department of HUC in an Eastern city; Point "B" included the enlarged role of the UAHC in the defense of Jewish rights at home and abroad. This object was strengthened by the introduction of Article VII to the constitution which created a Board of Delegates on Civil and Religious Rights to carry out these objectives (hereafter referred to as BDCRR). Additional constitutional changes included: that the Council meet biennially; that the Executive Board meet immediately after the Council sessions to elect officers and then semi-annually in the months of January and July, with sixteen members required for a quorum.34

The BDAI, which primarily represented Eastern congregations, had now been absorbed by the UAHC and the struggle between the East and the West was officially over. The Reformer and Jewish Times (New York), The Jewish Record (Philadelphia), and The Jewish Messenger all received the news just prior to press time on July 12, 1878, and they all joyfully printed a brief announcement that the plan for Union had been agreed upon and was official.35 The Jewish Messenger, which originally opposed the UAHC, wrote on July 26, 1878:

"The Milwaukee Convention (July 1878) is a red-letter day in the annals of American Judaism and a step forward whose importance cannot be over-estimated. Our leaders and laymen have determined to pull together, instead of pulling apart; this is the significant result, and with this we are satisfied. ... Too much praise cannot be awarded the delegates to the Convention for their harmonious and public spirited action, which has added to the esprit-du corps of American Judaism."36

When the Sixth Council met in New York City, July, 1879, 104 congregations belonged to the UAHC, an increase of 18 congregations over the Council of 1878. This figure included 12 congregations from New York State, 1 from Rhode Island, 2 from the District of Columbia, and 8 from Pennsylvania.37 By the time of the 1879 Council there was one national religious organization representing the Jews of America — the UAHC.

34 Ibid., 1:421-33 (Constitution as proposed by Executive Board); 1:537-42 (changes made in proposed Constitution by the Council); and 1:546 (Constitution adopted).
35 Reformer and Jewish Times, 12 July 1878; Jewish Record, 12 July 1878; and The Jewish Messenger, 12 July 1878.
36 The Jewish Messenger, 26 July 1878.
37 UAHC, 1:562-68.
The Founders of the Union

Organized as a lay institution, the UAHC was led by non-rabbinic members of American Jewish congregations. Not one rabbi was among the representatives of the five Cincinnati congregations who met to call for a conference to establish the Union. Out of the 97 delegates who gathered together at the 1873 founding convention, only five were rabbis.\(^\text{38}\)

Prior to 1873 all attempts to unite American Israelites were made by rabbis. Having failed, the rabbis were forced to stand aside and allow the laity to proceed. The *Jewish Messenger* explained:

"What the clergy have failed to do, the laymen are striving very faithfully to begin and to advance. A society has been formed, composed of delegates from forty congregations in the West ... If they succeed ... they will do a substantial service and awaken a lethargic and careless community."\(^\text{39}\)

The fact that the laity accomplished what rabbis had failed to do was repeated again at the opening of the First Council in 1874, held in Cleveland, Ohio. In his words of welcome, Sigmond Mann, the temporary chairman, referred to the unsuccessful Cleveland Rabbinical Conference of 1855:

I offer you all a hearty and cordial welcome to our ... City — famed ... for its Conventions, and where a similar convention, held nineteen years ago, failed to achieve its object. But that Convention consisted of rabbis only. Today the practical businessmen of this land are here assembled.\(^\text{40}\)

In 1875 President Moritz Loth reiterated this theme, appealing to Israelites to join congregations and to bring those congregations into the fold of the Union, and commending every Israelite to support the UAHC:

Trusting that the elders of all congregations may meet annually in Council and work in harmony, let me beg of all the leaders in Israel not to manifest any indifference to this great movement because it was planned and brought into active existence by humble laymen, and not by a Rabbi or Rabbonim.\(^\text{41}\)

All this was accurately summed up in Simon Wolf's address to the Sixteenth Council:

The Council rightly named is largely composed of representative laymen,

\(^{\text{38}}\) Ibid., 1:vii-viii; and 1:7-9.

\(^{\text{39}}\) *The Jewish Messenger*, 29 May 1874.

\(^{\text{40}}\) *PUAHC*, 1:28.

\(^{\text{41}}\) Ibid., 1:122.
the Rabbis who act as delegates only, cheerfully yield to the practical judgement of those who after all have to furnish the sinews of war, and who form the central power for upholding the Jew and Judaism outside of the Synagogue and Temple."

The most influential person in the UAHC between 1873 and 1903 was Moritz Loth, who may correctly be called the founder of the Union. Born in Austria, Loth came to the U.S. in 1852. Besides being a successful businessman, this Cincinnatian also wrote books, short stories, and editorials for local papers.\footnote{Ibid., 5:3992.} Loth was the first to propose the idea of a national Jewish religious organization to the Cincinnati congregations; he chaired the founding convention; and he served as president of the UAHC from 1873 to 1889. As president, Loth set the direction of the Union, constantly suggesting activities for the Union to pursue in order to increase its income, to encourage Israelites to observe the Sabbath and to join congregations, and congregations to join the UAHC. Loth pushed for the UAHC to oversee circuit preaching activities, the support of the Hebrew Union College, agricultural pursuits, a Young Ladies’ Hebrew Seminary, Ladies’ Educational Aid Societies, the publication of books, and the improvement of Sabbath-schools. While not all of Loth’s programs were instituted, he was involved in every aspect of the Union’s life. Loth’s dedication to the UAHC and to American Judaism was accurately expressed in \textit{The Menorah}:

(Moritz Loth) conceived the grand idea of welding into a Union the Jews scattered over the land, and (his) undaunted energy and executive ability surmounted the obstacles that obstructed its (the UAHC’s) way. . . . His name is . . . written with indelible letters upon the annals of American Judaism.\footnote{\textit{The Biographical Encyclopaedia of Ohio of the Nineteenth Century} (Cincinnati: Galaxy Publishing Company, 1876), pp. 73-74.}

When Loth resigned as president in 1889, the UAHC elected Julius Freiberg to succeed him. Freiberg had served as vice-president of the Union since 1873 and was vice-president of the Board of Governors of HUC. Born in Germany,
Julius Freberg
(1823-1905)
Cincinnati businessman and President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1889-1903
Lipman Levy
(1836-1918)
Prominent Cincinnati attorney and Secretary of the Union
of American Hebrew Congregations, 1873-1917
Freiberg came to the U.S. in 1852. In Cincinnati he, too, was a very successful businessman and active in both civil and religious affairs. He served as president of his congregation, Bene Israel, for nearly twenty-five years.45

Freiberg's leadership of the Union was far more passive than Loth's. His annual reports as president reviewed the Union's activities and offered words of encouragement and hope. During his fourteen years as president he introduced no new programs, but simply fostered the development of those already in existence. Freiberg's dedication to Judaism and the Union and his great sense of responsibility were captured in The Menorah:

"(Julius Freiberg) a staunch and warm adherent of our ancestoral faith, is with heart and soul devoted to his sacred charge."46

Loth and Freiberg were assisted in supporting and maintaining the UAHC by men like Bernhard Bettmann, president of the Board of Governors of HUC from 1875 through 1903; Lipman Levy, secretary of the UAHC from 1873 through 1903; and Simon Wolf, who directed the Board of Delegates on Civil and Religious Rights.

Isaac M. Wise played a very limited role in the UAHC. Although he was often called the "founder of the Union," The Menorah more accurately described Wise as the "Spiritual father of the Union."47 Even though Wise had advocated the cause of union almost since his arrival in America, he did not, in actuality, found the UAHC. Wise's only official position in the UAHC was that of an employee: the president of the HUC faculty. But even in that capacity Wise was responsible to the Board of Governors, who on occasion overruled his decisions. Wise supported the UAHC in The American Israelite, spoke on its behalf throughout the country, and made suggestions for the betterment of the organization.48

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48 Wise did not sign the Call for a Convention in 1873, and at the First Convention was merely a delegate representing Congregation Zion of Shreveport, La. It is difficult to ascertain Wise's influence on Loth. On several occasions Loth went against Wise's opinions, clearly acting as an independent agent.
Wise may have refrained from taking an active part in the UAHC so that his opponents would not also oppose the UAHC. *The Jewish Messenger* referred to this in 1875:

“One gentleman who, with the best intention on his part, has been blamed for all the ill success of the ‘Union’ in the East, wisely refrained from taking a prominent part in the proceedings (of the 1875 Council) thus depriving his detractors from using their old arguments.”

To be sure, the UAHC was attacked on numerous occasions because of Wise. In 1884 Rodef Sholom of Philadelphia left the UAHC, ostensibly because of Wise. In 1887 *The American Hebrew* (New York) stated that the failings of the UAHC should be blamed on Wise:

“The blame for this failure (the UAHC) is placed everywhere except where it belongs — on the wrong spirit and rule or ruin policy of its real head, the editor of the *Israelite*.”

In many ways the members of the UAHC looked upon Wise as its founder and leader, and they constantly lauded his efforts on their behalf. As a sign of their esteem for Wise, the UAHC presented him with a new home at the public celebration of his seventieth birthday. When Wise died on March 26, 1900, a special meeting was held to discuss mourning procedures for HUC. The minutes of that meeting record that “the sorrow felt by the little community about the College building could almost be felt, so pregnant was the air with its crushing weight.” To perpetuate Wise’s memory the UAHC created the Isaac M. Wise Memorial Fund to carry out the objectives to which Wise had dedicated his life. Wise’s direction and support for the UAHC was an important ingredient in its establishment and growth. It must be emphasized once more, however, that lay leaders founded the UAHC, organized it, ran its daily operations, and gave the UAHC its own character. Wise himself acknowledged this point when he wrote:

“I cast all my schemes upon the shoulders of working men, active laborers,

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49 *The Jewish Messenger*, 23 July 1875.
50 *PUAHC*, 2:1575-76; and *American Hebrew* 12 June 1885.
51 *American Hebrew*, 19 August 1877.
52 *PUAHC*, 3:2134; 3:2140-50; 3:2301-4; and 3:2427-68.
53 Ibid., 5:4173.
54 Ibid., 5:4151-54; 5:4499-4501; 5:4311-14; and 5:4356-58.
energetic and zealous pioneers; and they did what could be expected of them. They built up a Union, and no rabbi and no petty scribes can destroy it, for it is rooted in the hearts of the people."

The Structure of the Union

The UAHC was governed by its constitution from the time of the First General Convention in 1873. This Constitution set forth the name and objects of the UAHC, rules on membership, rules governing the Council meetings and the Executive Board, as well as provisions for amending the Constitution. Every member congregation of the UAHC was entitled to send representatives to the meetings of the Council, its governing body:

"The Council is the highest authority of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations — to make general laws for the government of all boards and committees by the Constitution provided, not in conflict with any provisions thereof."

As noted above, Council meetings were held annually until 1879, when the Constitution was amended so that the Council met biennially. The Council elected officers and members of the various boards, appointed committees, reviewed business done during the year, decided on policy, and initiated programs.

The Executive Board was responsible for administering all policies decided upon by the Council and controlled all funds and property of the Union. The Executive Board corresponded with member congregations, collected dues and other monies, appointed committees, adopted bylaws, and made recommendations to the Council in all areas of the UAHC.

The Executive Board, consisting of twenty members, began in 1873 to meet on a monthly basis. The Board was expanded to thirty members in 1879 when the UAHC absorbed the BDAI. From then until 1903 the Board met briefly immediately after Council sessions and then held a formal semi-annual meeting in January and an annual meeting in July.

The members of the Executive Board were elected by the Council and they elected their own president, vice-president, and treasurer from among their members. The Board also

56 Krauskopf, p. 86.

PUAHC, 1:423.
hired a secretary, the only paid employee of the UAHC (except for HUC staff) between the years 1873 and 1903. During the presidential terms of Loth and Freiberg, Lipman Levy functioned as the UAHC's secretary, from 1873 to 1903.

The Executive Board did much of its work through such committees as the Board of Delegates on Civil and Religious Rights, the Committee on Circuit Preaching, and the Board of Governors of HUC. All committees reported to the Executive Board, which in turn was responsible to the Council, composed of representatives of the member congregations. Thus, in theory, the ultimate power of the UAHC lay with the congregations.

Membership in the Union

Any American Jewish congregation could become a member of the UAHC simply by declaring its intention to do so, by agreeing to be represented at the Council, and by paying dues of one dollar a year for each of its contributing members or seatholders. Between the years 1873 and 1903 membership in the UAHC fluctuated between fifty-six and one hundred and fifteen member congregations.

Though the UAHC was the only Jewish national religious organization until the late 1890's, it did not, in fact, represent the majority of the American Jewish population at any time between the years 1873 and 1903. One of the reasons was that membership in the UAHC was limited to congregations only. In December, 1878, The Jewish Messenger denounced this, stating "It is Judaism, not synagogism, which is to be advanced." 57 The American Hebrew constantly derided the UAHC as not being truly representative of American Jews. In 1880 The American Hebrew observed that the Jewish population of the U.S. was around 250,000 and that the UAHC represented at most only 33,000 Jews, leaving 217,000 American Jews unrepresented in a national organization. 58

In 1889, when the Union’s membership had decreased to only eighty congregations, The Menorah wrote:

"From these (the UAHC’s membership) figures alone it will be plainly seen that the Union represents a small portion of the Jewish communities in the

57 The Jewish Messenger, 20 December 1878.
58 American Hebrew, 18 June 1880.
The UAHC constantly called upon congregations in America to join its ranks, and committees were appointed to increase the Union’s membership. Articles were published in the American Jewish press, circulars were sent to congregations and rabbis, speakers were sent out around the country, and HUC graduates were urged to influence their congregations to affiliate with the UAHC. By January, 1903, the UAHC had 115 member congregations. The 115 congregations counted 11,176 contributing members, equalling approximately 55,880 Jews. But the Jewish population as reported in 1903 was 1,127,268, clearly indicating that the UAHC stood for but a fraction of the Jews in the U.S.

The underlying principle in the relationship between the UAHC and its member congregations was expressed in the closing line of Article II of the Constitution, which declared that the objectives of the Union would be pursued “without . . . interfering in any manner whatsoever with the affairs and management of any congregations.” Legislation concerning the management of Sabbath-schools, the nature of the prayer-book, or rabbi-congregational relationships were rejected on the ground that the UAHC Constitution forbade any interference in the internal affairs of member congregations. This constitutional law was adhered to between the years 1873 and 1903. It alleviated many fears of congregations and individuals that the UAHC would assume religious authority, thereby undermining the practices of any single congregation. In many ways this principle originally identified the UAHC as a union of congregations in the U.S. irrespective of religious theology or practice.

Finances of the Union

Between the years 1873 and 1903 the UAHC constantly needed money. Although raised in a variety of ways, monies were never sufficient to accomplish all the Union wanted.

59 The Menorah, 7:51-52.
60 The American Jewish Year Book, vol. 5 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1903), p. 163. All UAHC membership statistics are taken from the Annual Reports of the Congregations.
to do, or to support existing institutions and committees, much less to venture into new areas of activity.

The UAHC had two financial funds: the General Fund (GF) and the Sinking Fund (SF). The SF contained all donations, legacies, and bequests given to HUC, and the GF received all other income. The money in the SF, later called the Endowment Fund, was supposed to remain intact, and only the interest was to be used to maintain the College, while money in the GF was designated for all expenses incurred by the UAHC. Until 1879 the GF’s income was adequate to meet the Union’s expenses and the SF grew slowly. In 1880 the Union’s expenses exceeded income by $499.65; in 1881 by $7,312.11; in 1882 by $5,317.01. With the exception of six years (1885, 1888, 1891, 1892, 1894, 1895) expenses continued to exceed income. The UAHC was forced to draw money from the SF to pay its bills, and by October 31, 1902, an overdraft of $36,852.12 had been accumulated in the GF, all borrowed from the SF.61

The activities of the institutions and committees of the UAHC were severely restricted due to the Union’s lack of funds. The Board of Delegates on Civil and Religious Rights suffered from a shortage of money and often claimed that it needed more funds to discharge its duties. As early as 1881 the Committee on Agricultural Pursuits blamed its lack of success on the financial straits of the Union and on the fact that the Union’s primary project, HUC, was not financially secure.62 HUC also suffered from want of funds. In 1881, for example, the Board of Governors was forced to limit the number of scholarship students it could accept because of the Union’s poor financial condition.63 Without additional funds the College could not admit more students, hire more faculty, or provide adequate supplies for both students and staff.

Throughout the first thirty years of the Union its leaders endlessly lamented their financial woes. Committees were formed to solicit funds, circulars were sent to congregations, appeals were published in the Jewish press, and numerous fund-raising plans were conceived. One of the most successful plans was adopted by the First Council (1874), incorporated

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61 All calculations are based on the Treasurer’s Annual Reports.
62 PU4HC, 2:1073.
63 Ibid., 2:1193.
into the constitution, and entitled "Privileges." The structure of this system was fourfold: first, any person donating $500 or more to any UAHC institution was named a patron of that institution and made an honorary member of its board; second, any person donating $1,000 or more to any UAHC institution was named a patron of the UAHC and of the beneficiary institution and was made an honorary member of the Council and of the board of the beneficiary institution; third, any person donating $500 or more to any UAHC institution with the proviso that the anniversary of the death (Jahrzeit) of a designated person be observed, was inscribed in a book of memorial and on the Jahrzeit itself the Kaddish was recited at HUC (such a donor received no other privileges); fourth, any person donating $5,000 or more to a UAHC institution was entitled to all the above privileges. This system resulted in many donations to the UAHC, and hardly a year passed when some individual did not donate money to HUC to mark the Jahrzeit of a friend or relative. However effective, this system was not universally endorsed. An editorial in The Jewish Messenger severely criticized HUC for selling Jahrzeits:

"The Board of Governors of the Hebrew Union College might have hit upon a more intellectual method of raising funds than by promising what are really masses for the dead on receipts of sums given in memory of parents and assuring intended donors that the Kaddish will be said by students."

The editorial called upon HUC students to refuse to participate in this activity, and it concluded by saying that this kind of religious business was unworthy of the College, and that other methods should have been used to maintain HUC "otherwise it becomes a cemetery not a seminary of Judaism."

In July, 1876, the Third Council resolved to form auxiliary societies to raise money for indigent students at HUC. The resolution specifically asked Jewish women for their help. This led to the creation of the Educational Aid Societies which enrolled members for an annual fee of one dollar. Members of the UAHC were constantly summoned to join the Educational Aid Societies. In the fiscal year ending May

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64 Ibid., 1:427.
65 The Jewish Messenger, 16 May 1890.
66 PUAHC, 1:249; 1:385; and 2:1144.
31, 1878, 52 Educational Aid Societies raised a total of $1,353. Societies could be found in cities such as Omaha, Nebraska; Winona, Mississippi; Galveston, Texas; Kalamazoo, Michigan; and Chicago, Illinois. Although often called the Ladies’ Educational Aid Societies, they were not restricted to women. Wheeling, West Virginia, had a Gentleman’s Aid Society, and several other cities had Educational Aid Societies for all their Jewish citizens. The Executive Board resolved on July 14, 1881, to set up a fund of one million dollars to promote the educational and agricultural pursuits of the UAHC. The Board proposed to sell 200,000 Educational and Agricultural Fund Certificates at five dollars apiece. This plan for raising money failed. By June 30, 1882, 792 Certificates had been sold for $3,960. In the following fiscal year $1,360 was raised, in 1884, $195, and after that only $20 more. On December 27, 1891, the Board ordered the secretary to destroy all the unused Certificates.

One effective method of raising funds was the establishment of memorial funds. The best example of this is the Isaac M. Wise Memorial Fund. It was established on May 6, 1900 and $16,981.92 was contributed to the Fund by the end of that fiscal year. October 31, 1900. On January 16, 1901, the Seventeenth Council appointed an Isaac M. Wise Memorial Fund National Committee to take charge of raising money for the fund. By December 31, 1902, the Committee announced that $125,017.95 had been collected, in addition to $25,000 in subscriptions, making the grand total around $150,000.

Dues from member congregations were a small but constant source of income for the UAHC. Congregational dues, in accordance with the Constitution, were one dollar for each

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67 Ibid., 1:442-44.
68 Ibid., 2:1129.
69 Ibid., 2:1159 (for the year 1882); 2:1293-1310 (for the year 1883); 2:1458-76 (for the year 1884); and 3:1889.
70 Ibid., 4:2869.
71 Ibid., 5:4151-53; and 5:4263.
72 Ibid., 5:4318-19.
73 Ibid., 5:4656.
contributing member of the congregation, and each congregation was to raise these funds in its own way. Occasionally the UAHC did give financial suggestions to its member congregations. The Constitution provided for the suspension of any congregation in default for two successive years, and on numerous, but not all, occasions this provision of the constitution was enforced.

Dues received between 1873 and 1903 totaled $189,774.21, a very small part of the Union's total income of $832,798.08. The difference of $643,023.71 was raised through solicitations, bequests, donations, and investments in U.S. bonds, 4% bonds, mortgaged securities, and stocks. Disbursements during these thirty years amounted to $830,259.66, leaving a cash balance in 1903 of $2,038.42 and $137,400 invested in securities for the Endowment Fund. Of the $693,359.66 actually paid out by the UAHC, $480,191.71 went to HUC for the purchase of a building, upkeep, salaries, support of indigent students, and other operating expenses. No other committee received as much support as did the College: the Board of Delegates spent $5,286.81; the Hebrew Sabbath-School Union received $1,403.74; and only $600 was expended on the implementation of Circuit Preaching activities. HUC was clearly the primary financial focus of the UAHC between the years 1873 and 1903.

PART II
ETHOS OF THE UNION

Reform, Orthodox, or Union for All?

Moritz Loth's 1873 report to Bene Yeshurun Congregation proposed three objectives for the intended Union. The first was the establishment of HUC, the second was the publication of Sabbath-school texts, and the third was:

To adopt a code of laws, which are not to be invaded under the plausible phase of reform; namely, that Milah shall never be abolished, that the Sabbath shall be observed on Saturday and never be changed to any other day, that the Shechitah and the dietary laws shall not be disregarded, but commended

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74 Ibid., 1:22-26.
75 Ibid., 1:421-33.
76 All calculations based on the Secretary's Annual Report Showing All Money Received and Expended.
as preserving health and prolonging life. . . .

And it shall be a fixed rule that any Rabbi who, by his preaching or acts, advises the abolishment of the Milah, or to observe our Sabbath on Sunday, etc., had forfeited his right to preach before a Jewish congregation, and any congregation employing such a Rabbi shall, for the time being, be deprived of the honor to be a member of the Union of Congregations.

Loth concluded his remarks with a further attack on Radical Reform Judaism, urging the Union to adopt "some safeguards against the so-called reform, which if not checked, may become disastrous to our cause."

Wise responded to Loth's statements by saying that the issues of Reform Judaism ought to be left to a conference of rabbis, since "congregational delegates . . . can only give utterance to the prevailing views of the time." Wise further added that:

It ought to be officially known that the congregations West and South, with very few exceptions, have embraced the cause of reform, as far as it is subservient to the preservation, elevation, and Americanization of Judaism; to the conciliation of faith and reason, law and practical life.

The First General Convention, July, 1873, obviated the potential conflict between Reform and Orthodox Jews by conceiving of a Union for all American Jewish Congregations, regardless of theology or religious practice. The preamble and constitution adopted by the assembly contained no reference to Reform or Orthodox Judaism. There are, however, several possible allusions to Reform Judaism in Article II:

It is the primary object of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to establish a Hebrew Theological Institute — to preserve Judaism intact; to bequeath it in its purity and sublimity — to Israel united and fraternized . . . to provide, sustain, and manage such other institutions which the common welfare and progress of Judaism shall require . . .

"To preserve Judaism intact" may have appealed to all religious factions, even the Orthodox, implying that Judaism would not be changed. More likely, "intact" connoted the preservation of Judaism as undamaged, unimpaired, at its original core or essence, as it existed prior to Rabbinic

77 PUAHC, 1:i-ii.
78 Ibid., 1:i-iiiv.
79 Ibid., 1:22-23.
Judaism which contaminated its purity with rituals and practices. The Reformers viewed Rabbinic Judaism as detracting from Judaism's essence as formulated in the Bible. This may be further seen in the use of words like "purity" and "sublimity." These terms probably referred to the removal of all superstitions and ritual practices, to the stripping away of foreign elements, and to the return of Judaism back to its Biblical state. The "progress of Judaism" was a liberal shibboleth which implied the continuous process of change within Judaism. Reform Judaism was conceived as a part of the process of Judaism's evolution to meet the exigencies of the day — again, a veiled reference to Reform Judaism in the UAHC's first constitution.

If the UAHC constitution was to be a selling point, to be used for public relations and to help bring congregations into the Union, then these words might have been purposefully written in an ambiguous way to appeal to both Orthodox and Reform constituencies. The closing clause of Article II, "without interfering in any manner whatsoever with the affairs and management of any congregation," might have been included to eliminate any congregational objections to the implications of this point.

The third "Article" of the constitution stated that any Hebrew congregation in the U.S. could join the UAHC. The UAHC existed on paper as a union for all American Jews; it was to be neither a synod for fixing religious principles nor a dictator of congregational religious practices. Between the years 1873 and 1903 the UAHC never imagined itself an official arm of any branch of Judaism, and it constantly sought membership from all congregations, whether Reform or Orthodox.

"Let the Position be Defined" was the title article of The Hebrew Observer on September 12, 1873. This article, attacking Reform Judaism, demanded that the UAHC detail its position on the religious issues of the day and clearly state its alignment with the Orthodox or Reform elements in Judaism.80 The Jewish Record put the Union's official position quite concisely when it wrote that the UAHC "knows no orthodoxy; it knows no reform."81

The Fifth Council of the UAHC, 1878, amended Article

80 Hebrew Observer, 12 September 1873.
81 Jewish Record, 2 July 1875.
II to read:

To promote the religious instruction of the young by the training of competent teachers, and generally encourage the study of Scriptures, and of the tenets and history of Judaism.\(^2\)

This paragraph may be the work of the Reformers within the Union. The objective mentions only the teaching of the Bible and ignores the Talmud, Commentaries, and Shulchan Aruch. Once again, this was a possible indication of the power of the Reform element in the Union, although at that time membership consisted of both Reform and Orthodox congregations.

In 1881 *The American Hebrew* identified the UAHC as a Reform institution saying that it was “composed mainly of the representatives of ‘reform’ congregations.”\(^3\) The first real break, however, between the Reformers and the Orthodox within the Union occurred in 1883, at the first HUC ordination ceremony. The menu of the ordination banquet listed clams, crabs, shrimp, and other non-kosher foods. When the food was served, several rabbis and guests walked out of the room, and the evening later became known as the “Trefe Banquet.” Jacob Marcus has pointed out that the “historic importance of this ‘Trefe Banquet’ is that the Orthodox-minded were now convinced that they could not work with the Reformers.”\(^4\) The *Proceedings of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (PUAHC)* does not make any mention of the “Trefe Banquet” or of its after-effects.

The antagonism of the more Orthodox Jews towards the UAHC was further aggravated by the Pittsburgh Conference of November 16-18, 1885. Led by Kaufmann Kohler and Isaac M. Wise, the Conference adopted a set of principles which severed all connections with Orthodox Judaism and laid out the platform for Reform Judaism. Wise called the principles set forth by the Conference a “Declaration of Independence.”\(^5\) The Pittsburgh Platform, coming so soon after the “Trefe Banquet,” opened an even greater gap

\(^2\) *PUAHC*, 1:538; and 1:541.
\(^3\) *American Hebrew*, 1 July 1881.
between the Reformers and the Orthodox in the UAHC. *The American Hebrew* called upon the more conservative rabbis and congregations to sever their connections with the UAHC as a protest against the radicalism of Pittsburgh, and against Wise who was president of the Conference and HUC. 86

The Executive Board of the UAHC tried to disassociate the Union from the Pittsburgh Platform and from the activities of Wise. On July 12, 1886, in response to a letter received from a member of the Executive Board who complained of Wise’s participation in the Pittsburgh Conference, the Executive Board considered it “timely and proper” to publish the following disclaimer:

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations is now, and has always been since the hour of its formation, a *real* Union of American Hebrew Congregations united for the purposes set forth in the Preamble and Article II of the Constitution, and no attempts looking toward an abandonment of the principles therein set forth have been made or would be tolerated, as any action to the contrary of these expressed ideas on the part of any officers of this Union we consider as endangering its future welfare and interests.

The Executive Board requests, as a simple act of justice, that the Union be held responsible only for its own acts, as shown by the doings of its Council and Executive Board, and *not* for the acts, opinions and utterances of any man or body of men, unless the same be officially endorsed by said Council or Executive Board.

Bernhard Bettmann, president of the Board of Governors of HUC, introduced a statement into the minutes of the Executive Board meeting which was also a disclaimer of the activities of Wise and the other Reformers. 87 These disclaimers were not fully accepted, and four days later, July 16, 1886, *The American Hebrew* demanded that the UAHC take action against Wise:

The responsibility cannot be shaken off by merely disavowing it. The Union must decide that the public utterances and conduct of the President of the College is in conformity with the propriety, just principles and the tenets of Judaism, or it must relieve itself of responsibility in the only manner that can be done, viz.; request the resignation of the President of the College. 88

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86 *American Hebrew*, 27 November 1885 and 4 December 1885.
88 *American Hebrew*, 16 July 1886.
The UAHC did not refer to this issue again, and no official rebuke was given to Wise or to any other participant in the Pittsburgh Conference. The official policy of the UAHC was sustained — it was a union for all congregations.89

During the 1890's the UAHC gravitated more and more towards the Reform branch of Judaism, although its ideal of being a Union for all Jewish congregations did not officially change. At HUC's sixteenth ordination, Rabbi Max Landsberg of Rochester, New York, in his Laureate Oration stated: "Reform is the demand of all who take an enlightened interest in their religion. . . . The whole instruction you have received here (at HUC) is in the line of Reform."90

At the Union's Fourteenth Council in December, 1895, Leo N. Levi unleashed a vehement attack upon what he considered the destructive nature of Reform Judaism. He said that Reform Judaism suffered from a lack of system, a great leader, unity, and standards. Levi concluded:

There is no religion, and can be none, that does not embrace both doctrine and rites. In every religion there must be contained a doctrine or belief, a command, as well as a model of life.

According to Levi the acceptance, obedience, and conformity to doctrine and beliefs were the sine qua non of any religion and "those who do not recognize such requirements place themselves beyond the pale of religion."91 Although the Council voted to thank Levi for his address and agreed to print it in the proceedings of the meeting, a motion was adopted stating that the printing of the address was in no way to be deemed as an endorsement of the views set forth in it.92 The officers of the Central Conference of American Rabbis submitted a protest against Levi's address, which said that Levi's conception of the Reform movement in Judaism was erroneous, that his conclusions were arrived at without

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89 It should be pointed out that in 1883, before the "Trefe Banquet," 102 congregations were members of the UAHC, and by the year 1886, following the Pittsburgh Conference, membership dropped to 96 congregations, and by the year 1887 the UAHC had only 81 members. Although this was the time of the 1883-1885 recession and no mention is made in the PUACH that any congregation left the UAHC for anything but financial reasons, the question must be asked to how many congregations left the UAHC because of the "Trefe Banquet" and the Pittsburgh Conference.

90 PUACH, 3:2770-88,
91 Ibid., 4:3394-3416.
92 Ibid., 4:3374-75.
Delegates at a meeting of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, circa 1890

(pictured with Isaac Mayer Wise, front row, second from left)
a thorough study of the topic, and thus his sweeping generalities were unjust.\footnote{Ibid., 4:3416.} Immediately after the Council, the Executive Board met and resolved that at least six months before a Council meeting the president had to submit the name of the Council’s main orator for Executive Board approval. This resolution was a reaction against Levi’s remarks. The Board asserted its power so that future speakers would be individuals whose opinions would be in harmony with Union ideology. In this context it may be assumed that because the UAHC was leaning in the direction of Reform Judaism, the Executive Board would not approve a speaker opposed to the movement.\footnote{Ibid., 4:3392.}

In *The American Israelite* Isaac M. Wise dissented from Levi’s address and argued that Council speakers should be “in full sympathy with progressive Judaism.” To *The American Hebrew* Wise’s editorial was a clear indication of the Reform element within the Union:

This is indeed a notable admission that the U.A.H.C., which by its title professes to be a Union of American Hebrew Congregations, without any reservations except that the congregations are of Hebrews and are in America, has no room for anyone or anybody that is not ‘in full sympathy with progressive Judaism.’

In the same issue *The American Hebrew* poked fun at the Reformers in the UAHC:

The telegraphic reports of the New Orleans meeting of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations described the members as listening to an ‘eloquent’ prayer with uncovered heads reverentially bowed. Query: How many delegates were present whose early training would have prevented them from being reverential with covered heads?\footnote{* American Hebrew, 21 December 1895.}

The opening of the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in 1887 and the establishment of the Orthodox Jewish Congregational Union of America (OJCUA) on June 8, 1898, were perceived as a protest against the Reform tendencies within the UAHC and a direct challenge to it. HUC was no longer the sole rabbinical seminary in America, and the UAHC no longer the only national organization for congref-
gations. At the Council meeting of December, 1898, Simon Wolf reprimanded the Orthodox congregations for organizing their own Union and for not participating in the UAHC:

I cannot imagine how any Orthodox congregation can be injured either in its principles, its aims, or its objects by contributing materially to the success of the Union.

Wolf went on to say that the UAHC had never dictated the form of worship, or the prayerbook that a congregation had to use; all these matters were left to the individual congregations. Wolf concluded, "I have never conceded, nor do I today, that this 'Union' was to cement the Reform element only."96

Wolf and the other leaders of the UAHC notwithstanding, the Union had by 1898 become identified with the Reform movement. In 1898 the Circuit Preaching Committee reported that one obstacle standing in the way of success was that the dominant population in many small towns was "of the Orthodox type."97 In the American Jewish Year Book for 1900 Charles Bernheimer wrote an article entitled "Summary of Jewish Organizations in the United States," in which he explicitly called the UAHC the congregational union for Reform Jewish congregations in America.98

The Seventeenth Council, January, 1901, elected Bernhard Bettmann as its president. Bettmann turned his attention to the recent convention of, "as they themselves call it," Orthodox congregations. The convention had criticized the UAHC and declared opposition to it a necessity so that "everything Jewish should (not) be permitted to pass away." On behalf of the UAHC, Bettmann protested against the charges, asserting that there could be no "purer, more enabling and elevating Judaism than the one taught and practiced in the congregations belonging to our Union." Bettmann closed this section of his speech with an expression of the Union’s views towards the Orthodox Jews and of the Union’s view of its own role in the future of American Judaism:

96 PUAHC, 5:3983-98.
97 Ibid., 5:3956.
We seek no quarrel with our orthodox brethren. ... We know that the
differences between us are mostly external ... and we rest content in the
conviction ... that time, the great evolutionist, is steadily at work and that
the future of American Judaism is irrevocably ours.99

Attitude Towards America

The Jews belonging to the UAHC saw America as the
land of opportunity and of religious freedom. When Julius
Freiberg opened the First General Convention in 1873, he
welcomed the delegates who had come from “our glorious
new ‘Land of Promise,’ the land of religious liberty.” The
Union, he continued, would be established to spread the
light, knowledge, and the spirit of religion “among the Jews
of this our adopted country.”100 The themes of religious liberty
in America and of America as the adopted homeland of
the Jews were a constant refrain in the words of speakers
at Union sessions. Often referred to as “the land of promise”
and as “the fatherland,” America was also described with
religious fervor as the Union’s members’ “Zion.” Simon Wolf
said that the Union brought “the children of Israel out of
the European desert into the promised land, the only Zion
to which we swear allegiance.”101

When the U.S. celebrated its Centennial birthday in 1876,
the UAHC participated in two ways. First, the Union joined
with the Independent Order of B’nai Brith in commissioning
the American Jewish sculptor, Moses Ezekiel, to create a
statue to “perpetuate the testimony of our love and recogni-
tion of liberty and freedom of conscience in this blessed
land,” for the American Centennial Exposition.102 Secondly,
the UAHC selected Washington, D.C., for the site of its 1876
Council meeting. Important parts of this Council included
ceremonies at Mount Vernon and at the tomb of George
Washington. The day’s activities included the recitation of
Kaddish at Washington’s tomb, and the planting of a tree
near the tomb so that it would be “remembered forever that
the representatives of the American Israelites have felt here,
to-day, the presence of the noble spirit of the great patriot,

99 PUAHC, 5:4288-90.
100 Ibid., 1:6.
101 Ibid., 5:3993.
102 Ibid., 1:88-89.
and have expressed the gratitude which they owe him and his compatriots."\(^{103}\)

The UAHC was also involved in political action in America, primarily through the activities of the Board of Delegates on Civil and Religious Rights. It fought to maintain the separation of church and state, protested against Sunday laws, spoke out on U.S. treaties, intervened in special immigration cases, and safeguarded the civil and religious rights of Jews in America and abroad. Much of this was accomplished with the help of U.S. presidents, the State Department, and several congressmen.

Simon Wolf, at the Sixteenth Council (1898), accurately summed up the attitude toward America prevailing in the UAHC:

It is so pleasing to feel that you live under a flag that protects one and all, and that the Jew as an American citizen occupies the same place as any other American. ... Patriotism on the field of battle has no sectarian bias, but is the outcome of the love of and for the Institutions under which we have lived so happily, and to which we cling with loyal affection.

God bless and preserve the United States.\(^{104}\)

**Zionism**

Various social, economic, and political factors during the 1870's and 1880's led to the rise of pre-Herzlian Zionism. As early as 1876, at the Third Council of the UAHC, a committee urged the Council to regard all movements, whether independent or collective, looking to colonization in Palestine, as impractical and futile ... (and) ultimate Jewish colonization in Palestine is erroneous and wholly without favor of serious consideration among American Jews.

On motion of the Council, this section on Palestine was stricken from the report before it was adopted.\(^{105}\) It nevertheless reflected the majority view. Most UAHC members saw post-Herzlian Zionism as a threat to their own security and well-being in the U.S., fearing accusations that the Jews could not be good and loyal citizens of America while supporting a nationalistic movement in Palestine.

\(^{103}\) Ibid., 1:265-76.  
\(^{104}\) Ibid., 5:3992.  
\(^{105}\) Ibid., 2:1418-19.
At the Sixteenth Council, July, 1898, the UAHC clearly and loudly proclaimed its anti-Zionist stand. In view of the “active propaganda being made at the present for the so called Zionistic movement” the UAHC deemed it to be “proper and necessary” to proclaim officially their opposition to Zionism:

“We are unalterably opposed to political Zionism. The Jews are not a nation, but a religious community. Zion was a precious possession of the past ... it is a holy memory, but it is not our hope of the future. America is our Zion. Here ... we have aided in founding this new Zion, the fruition of the beginning laid in the old. The mission of Judaism is spiritual, not political. Its aim is not to establish a state, but to spread the truths of religion and humanity throughout the world.”

In spite of some opposition, this resolution of 1898 stood as the official anti-Zionist position of the UAHC.

East European Immigrants

In the late 1870’s and early 1880’s immigrants from Eastern Europe began to flood the shores of America seeking political and economic refuge. American Jews founded immigrant aid societies, such as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and the Industrial Removal Office, and organizations such as the National Council of Jewish Women also came to the immigrants’ assistance. Through the year 1903, however, the UAHC did very little for the East European immigrants. The only arm of the UAHC actually to aid the immigrants was the BDCRR. The BDCRR petitioned the American government to help the Jews in Roumania and Russia, and it tried to expedite immigration procedures for those arriving here, while fighting against any discrimination by the non-Jewish American society against these immigrants.

The main activity of the UAHC was the adoption of resolutions signaling its support of the East Europeans. On several occasions the UAHC called upon American Jews to contribute money for the relief of the immigrants. In 1891 President Freiberg encouraged Jews to do everything possible to assist Jewish immigrants in becoming acquainted with the

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106 Ibid., 5:4002. The phrase “active propaganda” may refer to the establishment of the World’s Zionist Congress in August, 1897, and the Federation of American Zionists in July, 1898.
language, laws and customs of America, in making them fit "to discharge the duties and enjoy the privileges of American citizenship."\textsuperscript{107}

The single activity that the UAHC constantly considered was the formation of agricultural colonies. President Loth first introduced this idea in 1875, but it was not until 1879 that the Council resolved to purchase a tract of land for fifty families to establish a model farm school.\textsuperscript{108} For the next twenty-four years (through 1903) the UAHC continued to discuss agricultural pursuits, pass resolutions, adopt plans for colonization, and give support to the Hebrew Union Agricultural Society. No concrete results, however were ever forthcoming from the UAHC.

**Women in the Union**

Women played a very limited role in the UAHC. It was, however, recognized that the success of the Union depended in part on the support from Jewish women in congregations and communities. At the First Council meeting (1874) a resolution was unanimously adopted requesting Jewish women to aid the UAHC:

"We invite the co-operation of the women of Israel in behalf of the cause represented by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and we urge upon them the exercise of that influence which has always characterized them as among the pioneers of efforts that have tended to the elevation of Judaism."\textsuperscript{109}

Although Jewish women supported the UAHC, not one woman served on the Executive Board, on the Board of Governors, or on any committees of the UAHC during its first thirty years. The primary activity for which the UAHC solicited Jewish women's help was in fund-raising.

An area in which the UAHC could have made progress, but never took any concrete action, was in the formation of a Young Ladies' Hebrew seminary. Beginning in 1875 President Loth constantly advanced the cause of such a seminary. In 1876 Loth proposed that societies be established to raise funds which would be set aside until the necessary

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 3:2675.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 1:720.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 1:96.
$10,000 had been raised to found such a seminary. The committee appointed to consider Loth's suggestion called it a noble cause, but stated that the Union could not give the attention or support which a Young Ladies' Hebrew seminary deserved.\hspace{1em}^{10}\hspace{1em} Despite substantial support from the American Jewish press, the Council rejected the idea of a Young Ladies' Hebrew Seminary which Loth reintroduced in 1877, 1878, and 1879.\hspace{1em}^{11}\hspace{1em}

Four times during the first thirty years of the UAHC women were delegates at the meetings of the Council: one participant in 1896, two in 1898, seven in 1901, and four in 1903.\hspace{1em}^{12}\hspace{1em} In 1898 Simon Wolf in his address to the Council acknowledged the presence of these women delegates:

\begin{quote}
I am delighted to see that we have Jewish women as delegates, for I am sure that every cause is strengthened by their presence and their sincere, unselfish work. There is every reason why this radical departure from precedents should be followed in the future. The women in Israel are the heart and soul of religious life not only in the home, but in the Synagogue and the Temple. ... There is no reason why the Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations would not be enriched by a large attendance of cultured Jewish women who will bring many 'gems of purest ray serene' to add to the bright coronet of religious life for the home and for the Temple.\hspace{1em}^{13}\hspace{1em}
\end{quote}

In 1896 the Council adopted a committee report lauding the National Council of Jewish Women. The report expressed the Union's view of the Jewish woman's place in society when it claimed that the influence of the mothers and daughters in Israel, in the work of the NCJW, "must ultimately be felt in the home, the sphere of women." In the conclusion the report urged the rabbis and leaders of member congregations to give the NCJW all possible assistance to establish branches of the organization in their respective cities.\hspace{1em}^{14}\hspace{1em}

The UAHC's attitude towards women was clearly a product of the times. The Young Ladies' Hebrew seminary would have been the first institute of higher learning for Jewish

\hspace{1em}^{10}\hspace{1em} Ibid., 1:188-89; and 1:247.
\hspace{1em}^{11}\hspace{1em} See, for example, Jewish Times, 14 July 1876; Hebrew Leader, 4 August 1876; Jewish Chronicle, 4 August 1876; American Israelite, 27 July 1877.
\hspace{1em}^{12}\hspace{1em} PUACH, 4:3670f.; 5:3971f.; 5:4279f.; and 5:4696f.
\hspace{1em}^{13}\hspace{1em} Ibid., 5:3995.
\hspace{1em}^{14}\hspace{1em} Ibid., 4:3699-3700.
women in America had the Union acted upon Loth's recommendations. That there were women delegates representing congregations was, as Simon Wolf pointed out, a departure from precedent. In general, however, the UAHC did very little to further the condition of the Jewish woman in America.

PART III:
ENDEAVORS OF THE UNION

The Hebrew Union College

The establishment and maintenance of the Hebrew Union College (HUC) was the main activity of the UAHC between 1873 and 1903. HUC was the motive for the establishment of the UAHC and most of the Union's energies and finances were channeled into the College. It became a source of pride and accomplishment for the UAHC.115 As mentioned, the goal of establishing a rabbinical seminary was first set forth in Moritz Loth's proposal to Bene Yeshurun Congregation, then in the "Call for a Convention" issued by the Cincinnati Conference Committee, and again in Article II of the UAHC Constitution adopted in 1873:

It is the primary object of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to establish a Hebrew Theological Seminary.116

Much of the support the UAHC received initially was due to its intention of establishing a College. Several letters read to the First General Convention (1873) unequivocally indicated the corresponding congregations' support of the Union for the sake of a College. The First Convention also received several offers of land for the College.117

The First Council (1874) declared the College to be officially organized, the Second Council (1875) adopted the laws governing the College, and HUC duly opened on October 3, 1875. On April 24, 1881, the first permanent home of the College was dedicated. But the first real mark of the

116 PUAHC, 1:i: 1:4; and 1:22.
117 Ibid., 1:12-21.
UAHC's success occurred on July 11, 1883, when four young men completed the course of study at HUC and were ordained as "Rabbis in Israel." The first ordination ceremony also coincided with the tenth anniversary of the UAHC. When Julius Freiber welcomed the delegates to the 1883 Council (during which the ordination took place) he spoke of the highlight of the Union — its pride and joy, HUC:

We have established a seat of learning, the main object of the Union, the Hebrew Union College, and for the past eight years have maintained it at no inconsiderable expense. We have been very fortunate in purchasing ... a magnificent home ... and have collected a library of 10,000 volumes ...

We have reached the pinnacle of success at last, being about to witness to-morrow the conferring of the degree of rabbi upon the students of the head class. We have the honor of having educated the first American rabbis, instilled with the American ideas and principles, who are able to teach and preach in the English language, who are ready to promulgate and explain the tenets and principles of our simple and beautiful religion to Jews and Gentiles. ...""""118

Following the ordination of five more rabbis in 1884, Moritz Loth emphasized the great accomplishments of HUC:

"HEBREW UNION COLLEGE. This the first object of the Union has demonstrated ... that its success in attaining the objects sought by its institutions is beyond question. Nine teachers in Israel, fully equipped for their sphere of action, have been sent forth prepared to assume the functions of rabbis of our congregations.""119

Through the year 1903 the UAHC completely supported HUC. As already mentioned, more than one-half of the funds spent by the UAHC went to the College. The Union appointed committees to review the curriculum at HUC, to examine the students, and to hear the reports of the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors and the president of the College constantly praised the UAHC for all its support. As Isaac M. Wise described it in June, 1898:

It (HUC) had but one rock upon which to stand and build beside the grace and help of God, and that was the zeal, the enthusiasm, the prompting inspiration of that noble band of brothers that established the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, an act inscribed with indelible ink in the Book of Eternal Memory.""120

118 Ibid., 2:1278-79.
119 Ibid., 2:1454.
120 Ibid., 5:3903.
The Jewish press frequently supported the UAHC because of HUC. In March, 1887, The Menorah urged its readers to respond generously to a UAHC appeal for funding of HUC and affirmed that in its first twelve years the College "has borne good fruits which are spread in all directions." In September of that year The Jewish Messenger wrote that because of HUC, "the Union has become an educational factor in American Judaism... Its services, its practical work, has won recognition."^121

The UAHC was also excoriated because of the College, and sometimes by the same papers which supported it. The most common criticism was that the College had become the total center of attention for the UAHC. An article in The Jewish Spectator pointed to this in 1889:

It is to be deplored that the Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, in its biennial sessions, makes the government and financial support of the College the Alpha and Omega of its transactions."^122

In 1901 The Jewish Messenger cautioned that the upcoming Council must consider some effective means by which the UAHC could be "more than merely a biennial convention for the purpose of auditing the accounts of the Hebrew Union College. It should be a Union in fact, not merely in name."^123

HUC was the greatest accomplishment of the UAHC in its first thirty years. President Loth best summed up the UAHC's attitude toward the College:

If the Union of American Hebrew Congregations had no other object in view than to provide the Israelites of America with spiritual leaders and educators such as have already graduated from the College and those who are now preparing to do so, then its mission has been a glorious one and will mark an epoch in our history to which future generations will point with pride.^124

Sabbath-School Education

The second objective of the UAHC, according to Article II of the Constitution, was:

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^121 The Menorah, 2:142-43; and The Jewish Messenger, 13 September 1887.
^122 Jewish Spectator, reprinted in the American Hebrew, 16 August 1889.
^123 The Jewish Messenger, 4 January 1901.
^124 PUAHC, 2:1600.
To provide for and advance the standard of instruction of the young in Israel's religion and history, and the Hebrew language.\textsuperscript{125}

The UAHC tried to improve Sabbath-schools in two ways: first, it made suggestions to its member congregations, and secondly, it published Sabbath-school texts.

Beginning in 1874 the Committee on Sabbath-schools corresponded with teachers and supervisors of 70 religious schools in order to report on possible improvements and on the unification of the schools. Based on its findings, the committee made several recommendations. First, regarding studies to be taught in the Sabbath-schools, the committee suggested a curriculum which would include Hebrew in all classes; Biblical history in all lower classes; catechism in classes preparing for confirmation and in confirmation classes; and, finally, singing, especially religious songs. Secondly, the committee suggested that the majority of the time be devoted to instruction in Hebrew and that the remaining time be equally divided among the other studies. Thirdly, the committee recommended that biblical and post-biblical history textbooks be prepared. Fourth, concerning a probable union of Sabbath-schools, the committee reported that only professionals could act upon this matter. Furthermore:

As the Union has no right nor power to interfere \ldots with the internal affairs of any congregation, we do not consider it advisable to make to that effect any plan whatsoever.\textsuperscript{126}

The UAHC took no action on the above suggestions (except texts) other than to pass them on to member congregations.

Over the years the UAHC made additional suggestions for Sabbath-school improvements. In 1875, for example, the Council urged congregations to establish a three-year post-confirmation class from which assistant teachers could be elected.\textsuperscript{127} Among the suggestions of 1876 was that congregations hire only competent teachers fluent in the English language.\textsuperscript{128}

The above suggestions were just that — suggestions to

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 1:23.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 1:142-44.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 1:157.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 1:251.
member congregations for the improvement of their Sabbath-schools. The only other area into which the UAHC ventured was the publication of text-books. In 1874 the Union offered financial prizes to individuals who submitted the best text in biblical history, post-biblical history, and catechism.\(^{129}\)

By July, 1876, the Committee on Sabbath-schools reported that no manuscripts worthy of the prizes had been received. The Committee, however, examined two published texts and endorsed them for the financial prizes: Dr. S. Deutsch's Biblical history and Dr. Cassel's Post-Biblical history. The Council awarded prizes of $200 to each author and obtained the right to re-publish the texts.\(^{130}\)

In 1877 the UAHC offered a prize for the best hymn-book for Sabbath-school use. There is no evidence that a hymn-book was ever published, and it can be assumed that none worthy of the prize was ever submitted.\(^{131}\)

In 1883 the Eighth Council recommended that member congregations establish a Sabbath-School Union which would be affiliated with the UAHC.\(^{132}\) Organized in 1886, the Hebrew Sabbath-School Union (HSSU) assumed all the work and responsibility for Sabbath-school improvements and for the publication of Sabbath-school texts. The idea for the HSSU was probably modeled after one in the Christian community. Christian Sunday schools had organized themselves on local levels, first in Philadelphia and then throughout New England, but a national need for literature and educational materials required a larger organization, and in 1824 the American Sunday School Union was organized. This Christian Sunday School Union dealt primarily with the publication of Sunday School literature.\(^{133}\)

The main accomplishment of the HSSU was also the publication of textbooks. By 1889 the HSSU had published the "Book of Proverbs"; "Selections from the Book of Psalms"; "The Ethics of Hebrew Scriptures"; "Plan of Religious Instruction for Post Confirmation Classes"; and a "Course of Studies and Plan of Religious Instruction of the

\(^{129}\) Ibid., 1:95-96; and 1:124-25.

\(^{130}\) Ibid., 1:236-37; and 1:241-42.

\(^{131}\) Ibid., 1:389-90; and 1:527.

\(^{132}\) Ibid., 2:1420-21.

Hebrew Sabbath-School Union.” This last booklet outlined the topics to be taught in the various grades of religious schools. The four major areas of instruction were: History (Biblical and Post-Biblical); Judaism (Holidays, ethics, religious doctrines, practices, and customs); Hebrew (reading and translation exercises, and grammar); and Biblical readings (from various books of the Bible). By the year 1894, the HSSU published one more booklet entitled “How to Organize a Sabbath-School.”

In December, 1894, the HSSU decided to prepare and publish Sabbath-school leaflets on Biblical history and on ethical and moral religious lessons. The HSSU borrowed this system from the Christian schools which had distributed leaflets, known as tracts, since the early 1880’s if not earlier. By January, 1901, the HSSU reported that it had disseminated a total of 109,400 leaflets to 120 schools which were paid subscribers. This figure included a series on Biblical history and one on religion. The HSSU supplied free leaflets to some schools and orphan asylums, and distributed about 1,000 leaflets for home use to Jews living in small towns with no congregation or school.

Although the HSSU was founded because of the UAHC, it is likely that the UAHC founded the HSSU to carry out educational activities which the UAHC was unable to do without violating the Constitutional clause forbidding interference in the internal affairs of member congregations. When the HSSU requested incorporation into the “aims and objects of the UAHC” the Union rejected the idea. The UAHC, however, supported the HSSU both institutionally and financially; in 1894 President Freiberg called the HSSU one of the “offspring” of the UAHC.

Publications

The only literary piece the UAHC published between the years 1873 and 1903 was the English edition of the “Leeser” Bible. Christians had created societies for the purpose of publishing English Bibles as early as 1808, and in 1816 the

134 PUHCE, 3:2469; 4:3064-69; and 4:3418.
135 Ahlstrom, pp. 424-25.
136 PUHCE, 5:3958-9; and 5:4291-2.
137 Ibid., 5:3717; 5:3663; and 5:3669.
138 Ibid., 4:3363.
American Bible Society (ABS) was organized. The English Bible published by the ABS contained the New Testament and was found of little value for the Jewish Sabbath-school and the Jewish home.

On February 10, 1874, the Executive Board appointed a committee to determine how inexpensively the UAHC could publish an English Bible for Jewish homes and Sabbath-schools. By August, 1874, the Union came to terms with Dr. Abraham De Sola, owner of the copyright to the Leeser Bible, for a special UAHC edition of the English Bible. On August 2, 1874, the Executive Board ordered 500 Bibles at 95¢ per copy and began selling them at $1.00 a copy, the five cents difference covering the Union's shipping and handling costs. The American Israelite praised the action of the Union when it wrote:

This is the right step in the right direction, and thousands of these Bibles ought to be sold, in fact they should be in every Jewish home. Let the young and old read and reflect on the wise proverbs of Solomon, the sweet and inspiring hymns of David, and the inexhaustible philosophy of Job, which will do genuine good to all.

The printing and distribution of English Bibles was a success for the UAHC. In August, 1875, 500 more copies of the Bible were ordered, in July, 1877, another 500, and in 1880 500 more. By publishing this inexpensive English translation of the Hebrew Bible, the UAHC filled a void in Jewish Sabbath-schools and homes.

Circuit Preaching

In the late 1880's many American Jews lived in small towns, earning their living as merchants, and could not afford the services of a permanent rabbi. The absence of easy transportation prevented these Jews from traveling to larger cities for religious services or religious education. A number of individuals involved in the UAHC were merchants who had dealings with the small town Jews and had even lived in small towns themselves. These Jews knew, from both first and second-hand sources, that a system had to be devised.

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139 Ahlstrom, p. 424.
141 American Israelite. 21 August 1874.
to provide the small town Jews with religious services and education, to keep them in touch with Jewish life, and otherwise to fulfill their needs as Jews. The UAHC hoped to solve this problem by introducing circuit preaching, a scheme whereby rabbis would visit the small towns to lead services, to give lectures, and to help with the education of the young. The project for circuit preaching was first introduced by President Loth on July 14, 1874.\textsuperscript{143} For 21 years the UAHC discussed but never implemented circuit preaching plans. In April, 1895, \textit{The American Hebrew} accurately charged that circuit preaching "has been the theme of many discussions, resolutions, and reports. But it had never gone beyond any of these three stages."\textsuperscript{144}

In December, 1895, the first successful circuit preaching plan was given to the Executive Board. The Committee on Circuit Preaching appealed to all American rabbis, asking them to visit a limited number of towns once every eight to ten weeks. The Committee furnished rabbis with copies of the regular weekday evening service from the Union Prayer Book and a letter which the rabbis could utilize in corresponding with the communities they were to visit. The Executive Board appropriated $100 for the Committee to implement this plan.\textsuperscript{145}

On December 1, 1896, the Committee on Circuit Preaching described its first successful endeavor: 19 rabbis made 154 visits in 53 towns in 19 states; 30 towns counted 618 members, with 862 students in their Sabbath-schools; 3 Sabbath-schools were organized through correspondence; 1,000 copies of the evening service from the Union Prayer Book were distributed and put into use. Difficulties with both rabbis and the communities confronted the committee. Some of the rabbis had physical limitations, others were preoccupied with their own duties, and refused to take the initiative, and many ignored the work out of indifference. More problems were caused by the small towns themselves. Social barriers and national differences often prevented unions for religious purposes. The committee noted that due to the greater percentage of native-born Americans in the South, Jewish

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., 1:36.
\textsuperscript{144} \textit{American Hebrew}, 15 April 1895.
\textsuperscript{145} PU\textit{AHC}, 4:3431-35; and 4:3656-59.
communities in this region responded more kindly to circuit preaching than those in the North. The committee stated that in the North, especially in the New England states, "the field is very infertile, owing to the fact that these communities are made up of foreign born, who desire a 'Shochet' or a 'Mohel' in preference to a Rabbi, and who are prejudiced against the Rabbis of the reform school."\(^{146}\)

The Circuit Preaching Committee established one other successful program— the publication and distribution of sermonic pamphlets to be used on the High Holydays. Within one year, by December, 1899, 300 pamphlets were printed, 200 sent out, of which 125 went directly to small towns. The response was overwhelming and the committee received requests for weekly discourses. In 1901 and 1903 the committee reported on the continuing success of the High Holyday sermons, and requested monies to publish weekly sermons. By 1903, however, the publication of weekly sermons had still not been approved.\(^{147}\)

The Committee on Circuit Preaching brought the problems of the small-town Jew to the attention of Jews in larger communities. In 1903 the committee stressed two points: first, the duty which rural Jews owed to themselves to provide for religious observances and for the religious education of their children; second, the duty that large and wealthy city congregations owed to their country brethren to strengthen and aid them. To best achieve its goals, the committee proposed that a full-time circuit preaching rabbi be engaged. The Council agreed to engage a full-time field secretary, and directed the Executive Board to hire such a person whose duties would be the following: to gather statistics of all Jews in all communities; to organize rabbis to carry out circuit preaching activities by state; to appoint rabbis in each state to oversee circuit preaching rabbis; to raise funds for circuit preaching activities and for the Isaac M. Wise Memorial Fund. The employment of a national field secretary was the last proposal of the Committee on Circuit Preaching between the years 1873 and 1903, and it established an organizational structure still utilized today in the institution of UAHC regional rabbis.\(^{148}\)

\(^{146}\) Ibid., 4:3653-56.

\(^{147}\) Ibid., 5:4125-26; 5:4145; 5:4268-70; 5:4317-18; and 5:4473.

\(^{148}\) Ibid., 5:4624-28; and 5:4735-38.
Board of Delegates on Civil and Religious Rights

As mentioned the UAHC absorbed the Board of Delegates of American Israelites (BDAI) in 1878. In an effort to continue the BDAI's activities the UAHC created the Board of Delegates on Civil and Religious Rights (BDCRR). Throughout its history the BDCRR announced that it carried out its responsibilities as American citizens and it did not seek special consideration as Jews. Simon Wolf, who chaired the BDCRR from 1885 through 1903, repeated this message time and time again. In 1895 he said:

We do not ask for any protection on account of race or faith, but simply that in demand for redress of wrongs, inflicted on any people, equal and impartial justice shall be accorded to all who are oppressed, irrespective of sectarianism.\textsuperscript{149}

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty" was the watchword of the BDCRR.\textsuperscript{150} In America the BDAI fought against anti-Semitism, Sunday Laws, and attempts to make America a Christian country. In 1890, for example, the BDCRR reported that attempts to insert a clause in the U.S. Constitution recognizing Christianity as the supreme law of the land had monopolized its attention. Sectarians wanted the Constitution to recognize Jesus Christ as the ruler of nations and America as a Christian country. Wolf stated that in his opposition to such movements he had confined his arguments to the "inalienable rights of American citizens," which would be denied Jews if ecclesiastical bodies had control of the United States. Through 1903 the BDCRR continued to fight any legislation whose intention was to make America a Christian nation.\textsuperscript{151}

Overseas the BDCRR sought aid for Jews in Russia, Roumania, Turkey, Morocco, and Palestine. Most of these activities were inherited from the defunct BDAI.\textsuperscript{152} In many of their overseas activities the BDCRR cooperated with the defense organizations of other nations, e.g., the British Board of Deputies and the French Alliance Israélite Universelle. The BDCRR was extremely active through 1903. It is,

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 4:3461.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 3:2129.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 3:2636-37; and 4:3354-57.
\textsuperscript{152} See Allan Tarshish, "The Board of Delegates of American Israelites."
however, difficult to ascribe its success to the UAHC, since the BDCRR carried on the activities begun prior to its absorption into the UAHC. It is to the UAHC’s credit, however, that it supported the BDCRR in all its endeavors and in this sense the UAHC shares in the achievements of the BDCRR.

Other Ventures of the Union

Among the activities of the UAHC are two others which deserve notice: the Union published the first census of Jews ever taken in the U.S. and played an important role in the 1893 World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago. In 1876 the BDAI invited the UAHC to participate in the collection and publication of statistics on American Jews. By 1877 the Committee on Statistics presented a condensed statement of statistics to the Council, including the tabulation of states, institutions, societies, members, value of property, children in religious schools, teachers, and the Jewish population. The committee recommended that the work be discontinued for three reasons: information was unreliable and probably inaccurate; the expenditure of funds for any purpose not strictly required by the UAHC constitution was considered unwise; and congregations belonging to the UAHC already furnished this information in their annual reports and, furthermore, other congregations could be incorporated by joining the Union. The Council did not ratify the committee’s conclusions and ordered the work to be continued.153

In 1879, after the UAHC absorbed the BDAI, the work continued under the auspices of the Union. In 1881 the Committee on Statistics reported that the work of collecting and publishing statistics of Jews in the U.S. had been completed. Before the close of 1880 the statistics were published in pamphlet form, and by July, 1881, over 4,000 copies of the work had been distributed. The committee believed that its approximation of 250,000 Jews in the U.S. was accurate. This publication by the UAHC was the first systematic effort to compile statistics on Jews living in the U.S., and the Union reported “numerous complimentary com-

153 PUAHC, 1:245-46; 1:349-57; and 1:374-75.
ments and letters of approval. . . .”

In December, 1892, the UAHC decided to participate with the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) in the preparation of a presentation of Judaism at the Chicago Congress of Religions. The subjects to be treated included history, ethics, polemics and apologetics, archaeology, and anti-Semitism. In addition to the CCAR, the UAHC cooperated with leading Jews such as Jacob Schiff and Oscar Straus, and with the National Council of Jewish Women. Following the World Parliament of Religions, the UAHC published all the presentations and papers in a work entitled “Judaism at the World Parliament of Religions.” The Menorah wrote that American Judaism need not “feel reticent in sending these addresses out, as they are all well worth a place in the literary history of American Israel.”

Conclusion

The UAHC was the first successful national Jewish religious organization in the U.S. The founders and leaders of the Union hoped to unite all American Jewish congregations to perpetuate and improve the quality of Jewish life in America.

The foremost goal, and the most significant accomplishment, of the UAHC during its first thirty years was the creation and subvention of HUC. Indeed it was the need for a Jewish college to train American rabbis which led to the founding of the Union. Henry Adler’s $10,000 donation to endow a Hebrew College provided the impetus for Moritz Loth to call for a convention to establish a national union of all congregations, under whose auspices the college would be opened. Prior to this time all attempts to build a Jewish college had been local, and Loth knew that only with the support of a nationally united American Jewry could a rabbinical college be successfully maintained. From 1875, when HUC opened, through 1903, most of the UAHC’s time, energies, and finances were directed towards HUC. Only after the success of HUC was firmly secured did the UAHC venture

155 Ibid., 4:3088-3102.
156 The Menorah, 17:126.
into other endeavors. Julius Freiberg confirmed this when he declared:

The founding and maintaining of the College was the prime object of the Union, the other subjects being added afterwards.\textsuperscript{157}

Aside from HUC, the UAHC achieved very little in its first thirty years. Its few accomplishments came very slowly and only on a limited basis. One of the UAHC's goals, as set forth in 1873, was to advance the standards of religious school instruction. The Union did very little in this area until the HSSU was organized as an affiliate of the UAHC in 1886. In 1874 Moritz Loth introduced circuit preaching activities. Twenty-one years later, in 1895, the first successful circuit preaching program was finally initiated. Loth also first proposed agricultural pursuits and a Young Ladies' Hebrew Seminary in 1875, neither of which was ever implemented. The one activity, aside from HUC, which the UAHC quickly and efficiently accomplished was the publication and distribution of an inexpensive English Bible. The UAHC did not initiate two of its most successful endeavors. The organizational and programmatic structure of the BDCRR was conceived by the BDAI, whom the UAHC absorbed in 1878. The BDAI also first formulated the idea of taking a census of the American Jewish population.

The founders of the UAHC built an organization open to all American Jewish congregations irrespective of theology or religious practice. The Union, however, grew slowly and was never truly representative of American Jewry. There are several possible, interrelated reasons for this. The majority of the Union's leaders and members between the years 1873 and 1903 came to America from Western Europe during the "German" period of immigration. Their congregations followed the German \textit{minhag} and many were Reform temples. Most of the immigrants arriving in America after 1873 came from Eastern Europe, and their religious thinking and practice was more amenable to Orthodox Judaism. As the UAHC became more and more the representative organization for Reform Judaism, the East European Jews had less and less to do with it. This situation was exacerbated by

\textsuperscript{157} \textit{PUAHC}, 5:3963.
the fact that, with the exception of the BDCRR’s activities, the UAHC did nothing to assist the Eastern European immigrants. Newly formed associations met the social and religious needs of the immigrants and in turn received their support. Furthermore, as the UAHC became a Reform institution, the more Orthodox American Jews founded their own organizations. In addition, because Union membership included only congregations, the UAHC did not represent, nor did it receive the support of, Jews who did not join a congregation.

Although the UAHC had few accomplishments, never truly represented American Jewry, and constantly struggled to remain financially solvent, the Union’s influence can be seen in several areas. HUC was the first Jewish college to train American rabbis to fulfill the needs of the American Jewish community. Secondly, the UAHC was a lay organization, founded and directed by lay leaders who firmly believed that the strength, integrity, and future of American Judaism lay with the congregations and their members. The UAHC also focused the attention of American Jews on the challenges confronting them, provided a forum for Jews to discuss issues, and established an organizational pattern for subsequent Jewish institutions. Lipman Levy, secretary of the UAHC for over thirty years, understood this as early as 1901:

The fact is ... that the organization of the Union has done much to arouse the true spirit of fraternal cooperation among the Jews of the United States, and its good efforts are to be seen almost daily: for instance, the opening of the Jewish Theological Seminary ... the organization of the Orthodox Union of Congregations, and possibly others that I cannot now recall.158

During its first thirty years, 1873-1903, the UAHC planted the seeds which would in the twentieth century blossom in such areas as education, youth activities, programmatic aid to congregations, and political action protecting the civil and religious rights of both Jews and non-Jews. Due to the efforts and struggles of its founders during the years of its birth, 1873-1903, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations stands today as an integral part of American Jewish life in a number of important areas.

158 The Jewish Messenger, 11 January 1901.

This collection of contemporary short stories, poetry, and essays allows English readers an insight into some possible states of mind that arise from being both Jewish and Latino.

The twenty-five contributions exhibit a wide range of styles and capacities. The sordid life of an ignorant peddler becomes a work of art in the hands of Peruvian novelist Isaac Goldemberg; while the overwrought sensibilities of the Uruguayan Teresa Porzecanski or the Brazilian Clarice Lispector skitter off the brittle surface of contemporary Latin American writing. The non-Jew Julio Ricci embroiders remorselessly the time-worn theme of the mysteriousness of being Jewish; while Jaime Alazraki provides the obligatory look at Borges and kabbalah. The Argentine American Saul Sosnowski does us all a service by his excellent review essay on Jewish Argentine writers.

Poetry, notoriously the most difficult task for translators, represents the least comfortable accommodation we are offered between Jewish and Latin American traditions: what is one to make of a verse by Cesar Tiempo (né Israel Zeitlin) entitled “Verses to a Dictionary and to the Neckerchiefs (Worn by Gauchos)?”

The editors are to be congratulated for having assembled the present material and making it available in English. Pity that its title, beginning as it does with a Hebrew word, practically assures that the anthology will not be picked up by Latin Americanists.

Judith Laikin Elkin

Judith Laikin Elkin is program officer for the Great Lakes Colleges Association and the author of *Jews of the Latin American Republics* (Chapel Hill, 1980), and *Latin American Jewish Studies* (Cincinnati, 1980).

Founded by the Polish nobility in the 13th century, the town of Kolomea, in eastern Galicia, has a synagogue built by a Polish ruler in honor of his Jewish lieutenant, Jan Samuel Chryanowski, who held off the Turks in 1675. Here, in Kolomea, were born the musical children of Maier Feuermann. Maier, at first a "proste klesmer" who played at ghetto "simchas," became a conductor, performer, and teacher. He began intensive daily practice with his first son, Sigmund, at 3½. The boy absorbed the violin repertoire and performed at 5 in Lemberg, the capital of Galicia, where 50,000 Jews lived. Maier was advised to take his "wunderkind" to Vienna. Jews had been forbidden in the city until 1848; yet in two generations they had become the cultural leaders of Vienna. This Jewish intellectual dominance was upsetting both to anti-Semites and to the Orthodox. "As the old Austrian tradition decayed, the Jews with versatility and energy took on the cause of German culture (p. 17)." Otakar Ševčik accepted Sigmund as his pupil, and the younger, equally talented brother, known as Munio, got a cello teacher of his own. The boys toured Europe together in concerts. Munio became such a spectacular cellist that he was accepted in Leipzig on scholarship at the conservatory. The competition among the Jewish musicians was intense, and Munio was spurred on to such achievement that he was recommended for a full professorship at 16 in Cologne. Founded by Emperor Claudius, Cologne had become prosperous enough by 1414 to be able to afford to expel its Jews. With Munio's appointment to the faculty, "the Jews had indeed returned." His debut in Gürzenich Hall in 1919 was a sensation. Paul Reifenberg, only two generations out of the ghetto himself, became, first his patron, later, his father-in-law. In the 42-room mansion on the Rhine all the musical greats of the world were entertained: Casals, Kreisler, Segovia. After years of teaching, touring in concerts, performing in trios and quartets, he was appointed cello professor at the most prestigious conservatory in Berlin in 1930. The florescence of the Jewish intellectuals, to whom Munio was a hero, is told against the decay of Weimar democracy. The last chapter
deals with the drama of the Jewish refugees and their struggle to establish themselves in the hostile competitiveness of the New York musical world. The story of how he won over his tough audiences and was finally accepted into the musical elect in the two years before his tragic death, at 39, is told in the engrossing last chapters of this fascinating biography. Although his brief life prevented the full flowering of his genius, Feuermann was, in 1942, the greatest cello virtuoso the world had ever known. Fortunately his recordings, and his notes on technique have survived.

Ruth Rosenberg

Ruth Rosenberg teaches English at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York.

This volume is dedicated to the memory of David N. Barocas, a self-educated scholar of Sephardic letters and a driving force behind the advancement of Sephardic culture in America. Contributions to this book include an analysis and bibliography of Judeo-Spanish proverbs by Henry V. Besso, a sketch of the activities of the Sephardic Jewish community of New York in the 1920's by Joseph M. Papo, and a brief Ladino-English dictionary by Sam Maimon.


This volume is the story of Beth El Synagogue in New Rochelle, New York, which has become an international showplace, renowned for the beauty of the numerous objects installed in the synagogue. Beth El has taken archaeological finds, biblical quotations, and other sources of ancient Israel and placed them in the synagogue as evidence of the rebirth of the concept of art and architecture as one.

The book contains forty full-page color photographs of the major works of art and artistic installations in the synagogue.


*Immigrants at School* is an unrevised copy of the author's doctoral thesis, submitted to the City University of New York in 1967. The author considers the essential problem of change within the public school system of New York City (newly unified as a city-wide public school system under the City Charter of 1897) as a result of large-scale immigration, mostly by Italians and Jews. This approach is indeed novel and a deviation from the normal focus on the manner in which the public schools attempted to "change" or Americanize the immigrants. The author links the educational innovations which appeared during the period under study to the larger reforms which were part of the Progressive Era in American history.

It is to the publisher's credit that this dissertation was published and given decent publicity. Yet the high price of the volume is not matched by its technical quality which is low and includes fuzzy, difficult-to-read pages.


When Michael Gold published his Depression-era novel of revolution, *Jews Without Money*, the scenes he so vividly described of conditions in the Lower East Side of New York did not come as a great surprise to most Americans, Jewish or otherwise.

Poverty then was an accepted fact of life, as the American era of champagne and roses turned into the era of soup kitchens and dustbowls.

Yet in the five decades since Gold's novel was published, a stereotype, based on the rapid development of a vast Jewish middle-class, has arisen which states that there are no poor Jews. It is to Thomas Cottle's credit that he has refused to accept this stereotype, and instead has written a moving book reflecting the miseries of the nearly one million Jews in America who live at or below the poverty level. Cottle chronicles the problems of poor Jews in America: old age, unemployment, poor housing, sub-stan-
dard health care. He also brings to light an added problem of being poor and Jewish in America, namely the fact that these one million Jewish souls live with the "special shame" of believing that Jews in America are not supposed to be poor and that they are "bad" Jews as a result.


The Invisible Empire is the first major bibliography of the Ku Klux Klan. Divided into two parts, the Klan of the 19th century and the Klan of the 20th, the book is subdivided by type of material: manuscripts, dissertations, government documents, monographs and periodicals. Most entries are annotated. Among the hundreds of bibliographic entries are a number dealing with relations between the Ku Klux Klan and the American Jewish community.


Philip Foner's Women and the American Labor Movement is a significant contribution both to the history of the American labor movement and to the history of American women.

In tracing the progress of American working women from colonial times to the outbreak of World War I, Professor Foner has utilized primary archival sources in over a dozen American repositories and has consulted a list of more than one hundred fifty newspapers and magazines (which, however, includes only one Yiddish newspaper and incorrectly lists Cincinnati as the location of the American Hebrew) among the hundreds of primary and secondary sources listed in his bibliography.

Professor Foner discusses in detail the participation of American Jewish women in the labor movement and he recounts with authority the great events and characters of that participation: the waistmakers' strike of 1909, the cloakmakers' strike of 1910, the Triangle Waist Company fire of 1911 as well as individuals such as Clara Lemlich, Pauline Newman, Rose Schneiderman, Rebecca Saul, and Dora Landburg to name but a few, and the women of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU).

One of America's leading "progressive historians," Philip Foner has written his most outstanding work. We now await the promised second volume of this comprehensive history that will carry the story from World War I to the present.


For nearly forty years Louis Dembitz Brandeis studied and worked in the city of Boston. Until Allon Gal's outstanding study, the relationship between the city and the man had been overshadowed by the national and international prominence of the man, both as an American Zionist leader and as a first-class legal mind whose struggles for legal reform in areas such as insurance, monopolies and labor-management relations are legend.

Yet it is to Gal's credit that he has kept these aspects of Brandeis' life in perspective while delving into the complex nature of Brandeis the Bostonian. What Gal has found is a Louisville-born and German-educated Jew who identified little with Judaism but strongly with the mission concept of the Jewish people. Gal has also found a Jewish lawyer who did not cater to Jewish clients, employed non-Jewish lawyers, yet counted
among his clients a large number of Jewish businesses. Finally, Gal has found a man devoted to German Kultur, possessed by the Puritan spirit of old New England, caught up in the new spirit of American cultural pluralism who synthesized the latter two into a form of Zionism which believed that by being a better Jew one could be a better American. Coupled with Brandeis' efforts to live a Brahmin existence while fighting for the working man and the small businessman, and added to the problem of growing anti-Semitism in early twentieth-century Boston which left Brandeis damned by WASPs and Catholics alike, these complexities, as superbly demonstrated by Professor Gal, make Louis Brandeis a fascinating and unrepresentative Jewish figure worthy of much more study by historians of the American Jewish experience.


Most American Jews take a deep and abiding interest in the great social issues that confront our times. Whether they are directly related to Jewish interests or not, these questions are often accompanied by numerous opinions offered by "experts" or by individuals or groups espousing a certain ideological, political or theological interpretation of the issue at hand. The average Jewish man, woman or child is thus confronted by numerous complexities in reaching a point of view on everything from premarital sexual activity to drug use to artificial insemination.

As a Jew it seems only right and logical for these people to ask "What does Judaism say about it?" Yet this is no easy question to answer, for Judaism, as the author tells us "does not offer one limiting, precise answer to every issue. Nor does it maintain that an answer remains the same for all time." In America, Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist Judaism all offer different views on many social issues. Rabbi Goldman has selected thirteen subjects for discussion, including abortion, autopsy, birth control, celibacy, and suicide, among others, and has traced the historical evolution of each issue in terms of Biblical and Talmudic times through the middle ages and the modern period.


Harry Gutkin, a first-generation Canadian Jew and president of the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada, has contributed an important publication to the growing number of works dealing with the history of Canadian Jewry.

Filled with over 400 pictures and enhanced by a most readable text, Journey into Our Heritage is, in a sense, "just what the doctor ordered." Its visual and textual accomplishments can only help to inspire more and more Canadians, both professional historians and those interested in the Canadian Jewish experience, to investigate the varied richness of that experience, both in terms of academic research and financial support for the cultural institutions dedicated to Canadian Jewry.


This is a very valuable source book for younger students of American Jewish history. Among its most important features is a section dealing with resource materials on Jews in America including bibliographical details, films, posters, and a useful chronology of important events in the American Jewish experience.

The Jewish Historical Society of New Haven has now published its second volume on the history of Jewish life in this important Connecticut city. The Society is to be commended for its ability to involve so many of its members in the research and writing of communal history. While the individual articles differ in their scholarly and literary achievements, the entire volume is a most useful contribution to the history of the Jews in New Haven.


For over fifty years Rabbi Aron Horowitz has been devoted to the Canadian Jewish community as a rabbi, community leader, author and educator.

His book is important as a "witness to Jewish history in Canada," a primary source for historians in Canada who are now getting on with the task of building a formal structure known as Canadian Jewish history. This work is indeed a foundation stone in that edifice.


The 1979 edition of the Jewish Book Annual includes articles by Daniel Walden on the American Jewish novel, and Stanley Chyet on Ludwig Lewisohn as well as detailed bibliographies on new books in American Jewish fiction and non-fiction.


Denese Mann's The Woman in Judaism is a very good little volume for high school and college-age students of both sexes. It surveys the role of women within Judaism from biblical times to the present and contains a small but useful bibliography.


While religious, communal and academic leaders within the American Jewish community bemoan the increasing plight of American Jewry in general, with its loss of familial cohesion, its mass departure from synagogue and temple life, its seeming acceptance of intermarriage, a less known and equally interesting phenomenon has been taking place among certain elements of middle-class Jewish society in America. A new traditionalism and religious orthodoxy can be detected among these American-born, college-educated, secularly-involved Jews. Nowhere is this event more visible than in Boro Park, Brooklyn, where, since the 1960's, as Mayer relates, a new sense of shtetl life has developed amidst the atmosphere of modern, metropolitan New York.

During the early decades of this century, Boro Park was a sought-after suburban neighborhood. Today, it houses countless Jewish men, women and children who have found that discontent and alienation are not the only results of modernity and secularization. They have found that one can indeed "dance at two weddings," living in both the "secular world of rapid change and the tradition-bound world of the new urban shtetl."
**BRIEF NOTICES**

**Morton Allan Directory of European Steamship Arrivals.** Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1980. 268 pp. $15.00

The original version of this volume was published in 1931. It contains the name of the vessel, the exact date of the vessel’s arrival, and the port of embarkation for steamships arriving between 1890 and 1930 at the port of New York, and for those vessels arriving between 1904 and 1926 at the ports of New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Baltimore.

This is a most useful volume, for it contains many of the elements needed to search the voluminous indexes to the immigration passenger lists in the National Archives.


Barbara Myerhoff’s book, *Number Our Days*, is the story of a group of American Jews, survivors of experiences as varied and as similar as Kishinev in Roumania and Williamsburg in New York. These are the elderly Jews of America, for whom the problems of intermarriage, a lack of religious affiliation, or charismatic sects take second place to the fears of falling, the pains of arthritic joints or the ever-present shadow of death and dying. How do they cope, these residents of Venice, California, a sun and surf area that also contains muscle builders, gays, muggers and rapists? They are the old world — Yiddishists, Socialists, Zionists and atheists — living among the “now” generation of southern California. What keeps them sane in a world whose standards reflect increasing insanity to these products of another century? Yet the shietl mind copes, and although it is fading, the life of the aging Jew must continue to occupy a place in the lives of the younger generation as well — not so much because we can any longer relate to the guiding philosophy of that life “Jewish comes up in you from the roots,” but because of something more immediate. Like Barbara Myerhoff’s admission that someday she too would be a “little old Jewish lady,” so must we all admit and face the reality of becoming little old Jewish men and ladies. In this outstanding study on Jewish aging, Barbara Myerhoff has given us ample time to glimpse the future and realize that “it is us.”


This small teaching volume is an attempt to introduce young Jewish children to the attitude of Judaism towards the human phenomenon of aging. As the authors correctly stress in the *Leader Guide*, “today . . . the structure of the [Jewish] family has changed. As a result of the nuclear family and of our increasingly mobile society, many of our children have no contact at all with older people. Thus they know little about the elderly or about growing old.”


When Professor Selig Adler retired from the State University of New York at Buffalo as Distinguished Service Professor of History, it marked the culmination of a relationship between a man and his institution that lasted nearly a half-century.

Selig Adler in many ways was the University of Buffalo (and later the State University of New York at Buffalo), both as a student, professor, administrator, and internationally known scholar. Adler’s strengths were many: one of the top scholars of American diplomacy, a contributor to the development of a “scientific” approach to American Jewish communal history, a beloved teacher who never had to worry about the size
of class enrollments, so great was the student demand to attend his undergraduate and graduate lectures.

It is a fitting tribute to Professor Adler, and an accurate reflection of the decency, sweetness, and humanity that reflected his relationships with students, that the majority of essays in this volume are not pieces done by the scholarly community for this Festschrift but essays written from doctoral and master's theses directed by Professor Adler himself.


In his Foreword to this book the noted American Jewish genealogist, Malcolm Stern, comments that the “Phillips family in America reads like a ‘Who’s Who in American Jewish History’.” Samuel Rezneck has given life to this family “Who’s Who” by analyzing the lives and contributions of its most famous members: Uriah Phillips Levy, Jonas Levy, Mordecai Manuel Noah and the progenitors of the family, Jonas Phillips and his wife Rebecca who produced twenty-one children. Because they married into such well-known families as the Machado, Seixas, Cardozo, Peixotto and Hendricks families, a history of the Phillips family, as written by Samuel Rezneck, is really a history of the Sephardic grandeur that once distinguished the American Jewish community.

Rischin, Moses, Edited by. The Jews of the West. The Metropolitan Years. Berkeley, California: Western Jewish History Center, 1979. 157 pp. $7.55 (including tax, postage and handling)

The Jews of the West is a volume of regional Jewish history which concentrates upon the metropolitan centers of San Francisco, Los Angeles, Denver and Portland, Oregon. Among the authors included in the book are Howard Suber on the Hollywood film industry: politics and popular culture from 1933-1953; Peter R. Decker on Jewish merchants in San Francisco; and William Toll on changes within the Jewish community of Portland during the years 1910-1930.


Heinrich Schalit (1886-1976) was an Austrian-Jewish composer of international note, whose early secular compositions gave way to an involvement with Jewish music at the outbreak of the First World War.

The composer of such outstanding works as Eine Freitagabend Liturgie (A Friday Evening Liturgy) and Chassidische Taenze (Hasidic Dances), Schalit was forced to flee Nazi Germany and was brought to America in 1940 through the efforts of Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein, the long-time spiritual leader of Temple B'ritth Kodesh, Rochester, New York. This volume contains a biographical sketch of Schalit, a major force in modern music of the synagogue, by his son, Michael.


This is the first comprehensive history of ORT (Organization for Rehabilitation through Training), the only Jewish organization founded in Russia to have survived a full century of existence (1880-1980). There can be no question that ORT has had a far-reaching effect on the economic and social lives of Jews throughout the world during this most turbulent century of Jewish existence. Leon Shapiro has done a most thorough job
in analyzing the early beginnings of ORT and in demonstrating the continuities and shifts within the ORT philosophy and activities, activities which today are spread over five continents. Perhaps more than any other organization of a world-wide nature over the past century, ORT has been there when Jews needed to begin life again as productive human beings and as Jews with a future.


This book is a charming and very readable profile of Dr. Nelson Glueck, the internationally-known archaeologist and, until his death in 1971, president of the Hebrew Union College — Jewish Institute of Religion.


Recently, a young Israeli scholar, born in Aleppo, Syria, spent several years teaching at an American college. A Sephardic Jew among mostly American Ashkenazim, he would often find that his identities as an Israeli — but more so as a Sephardi from an Arab country — would begin to suffer with each year away from his family and friends. Every so often he would make a mysterious trip to New York from which he would come back refreshed and apparently secure in his knowledge of himself. Ultimately, he revealed that he had gone to the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, where nearly 15,000 Jews with roots in the Syrian city of Aleppo live and work.

Joseph A.D. Sutton, himself born in Aleppo, has provided us with a fascinating glimpse into a community of non-Yiddish-speaking, non-Western Jews from Aleppo, Syria, who have established a genuine sub-culture and maintained a cohesive, traditional community amidst a much larger group of Ashkenazim who have lost much of their own historical cohesion and tradition.


This massive two-volume work is a consolidation of many passenger lists, some little-known, which have appeared in articles in a variety of periodicals. The volumes contain ninety-seven such articles, listing immigrants from England, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, Switzerland, France, Holland, Norway, as well as lists of Quakers, Huguenots and Mennonites. The articles are arranged in an approximate chronological order and cover a period from 1618 to 1878. Three of the articles, by Cyrus Adler, Leon Huehner, and J.H. Hollander, deal specifically with American Jewry and were originally published in the Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society.


This book is one of a series entitled “Newcomers to a New Land,” which analyzes the role of the major ethnic groups that have contributed to the history of Oklahoma.

Henry Tobias has produced a very useful little history of the Jews of Oklahoma. Among the topics that he discusses are the Jews and immigration; Jewish settlement in Oklahoma; the Jewish community; and the interaction between Jews and Gentiles. The author also provides a brief biographical essay.

It is indeed ironic that all of Emma Lazarus' verse is out of print except, in a sense, the one solitary poem emblazoned on the base of the Statue of Liberty in New York entitled 'The New Colossus.' It is ironic because, as Dan Vogel correctly assesses her contribution to American letters, Emma Lazarus "exemplified the experience of a minority writer in democratic America, dangling between assimilation into the general culture and adherence to the call of the ancient race." In this Lazarus presaged later heroes of American Jewish fiction created by, among others, Ludwig Lewisohn, Philip Roth and Saul Bellow. It is this legacy as perhaps the first "ambivalent American Jew as writer" that Dan Vogel considers in this interesting little book. For a poet whose only claim to popular fame is the last six lines of a poem, lines that begin with . . . "Give me your tired, your poor . . ." Emma Lazarus retains a truly remarkable place in the pantheon of figures associated with American Jewish arts and letters.


In 1977 Joseph L. Blau formally retired from the faculty of Columbia University. That retirement marked the end of over three decades of dedication on the part of Professor Blau to countless students of philosophy and religion, both as an educator and as a counselor in humanism.

It is not easy to assess Professor Blau's achievements, for unlike most American academicians today, he did not become a specialist with responsibility for one particular area of knowledge. Instead, Professor Blau focused on at least four areas of study: the philosophy of religion, the history and philosophy of Judaism, American philosophy, and social philosophy. His contributions to the history and philosophy of Judaism have been most outstanding, and works such as *Judaism in America: From Curiosity to Third Faith* (1976), *Modern Varieties of Judaism* (1966); *Reform Judaism: A Historical Perspective* (1973), and with Salo Baron, *The Jews of the United States: 1790-1840: A Documentary History* (1963), will remain enduring contributions to American Jewish history.

This *Festschrift* is well deserved and honors an important contributor to Jewish scholarship in America.


Hannie Wolf's *Child of Two Worlds* is another important contribution to the growing interest in the history of the "average" German-Jewish immigrant to America after 1933. By "average" is meant those individuals who did not make up the class of "refugee intellectuals" about which a number of studies have been written.

Until recently the great majority of German Jews who left at the same time and even earlier than the distinguished scientists, literary personalities and academics, have received scant historical attention. All of this is now changing as social historians investigate both the German and American experiences of this tragic group of Jews and as the refugees themselves begin to recount the tragedies and joys of their lives after the Nazi takeover of Germany.
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