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Eisenhower, American Jewry, and Israel
Isaac Alters

A decade after the Holocaust, American Jewry had still not learned the tragic lessons of disunity. The Eisenhower administration's complete misreading of the depth of American Jewish support for the State of Israel convinced Jewish leaders in this country that a unified and aggressive activity would be the only avenue open to its emergence from political powerlessness.

Unsere Leit ("Our People"): Anna Hillkowitz and the Development of the East European Jewish Woman Professional in America
Jeanne Abrams

For nearly a year, at the turn of the century, an East European Jewish woman, Anna Hillkowitz, travelled through several dozen American cities as a professional fundraiser for the Jewish Consumptives' Relief Society of Denver. The more than 200 letters she left behind documenting her journey yield a fascinating glimpse of American Jewish life in this period, notably the tensions between German and East European Jews, the difficulties associated with fundraising, and the attitudes of Jewish men to a female Jewish professional.

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Abba Eban, ambassador of Israel, and Moshe Sharret, foreign minister of Israel (seated), meet with President Eisenhower (1953).

(Courtesy of United Press International, N.Y.)
Eisenhower, American Jewry, and Israel

Isaac Alteras

While conducting research at the Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas, on a project dealing with the relations between the United States and Israel during the Eisenhower presidency, I came across a memorandum sent by the president to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles on October 28, 1953, which sheds some light on Eisenhower's limited understanding of American Jewry's attitude and concern for Israel. Referring to the constant criticisms coming from leaders of Jewish organizations about the administration's policies toward Israel, Eisenhower wrote: "The political pressure from the Zionists in the Arab-Israeli controversy is a minority pressure. My Jewish friends tell me that except for the Bronx and Brooklyn the great majority of the nation's Jewish population is anti Zion." These comments show ignorance of the feelings and concerns of the overwhelming majority of American Jewry toward Israel. They also provide a clue to how little attention would be paid by the Eisenhower administration to American Jewry's concerns in regard to Israel, especially during his first term in office. More importantly, the president's remarks require answers to some basic questions. First, who were the Jewish friends that might have given him that information, and what input, if any, did they have in the decision-making process concerning Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict? Second, how did the majority of American Zionists and non-Zionists feel about Israel, and how did they express their dissatisfaction with administration policies? Finally, how effective were they as a pressure group?

American Jewry's impact on U.S. policy toward Israel depended, in my judgment, on the extent it could convince American public opinion at large that support for Israel was in accordance with American strategic interests as well as moral interests. During the Eisenhower administration, at least in its first term, Jewish leaders were unable to convince either foreign policy decision-makers or large segments of informed public opinion that the best way to prevent the growth of Soviet influence in the Middle East was for the United States to back
Israel more forcefully in its foreign policy objectives.

Their lack of power had three main causes. First and foremost was the change to a Republican administration in 1953, which introduced a new foreign policy designed to forestall Soviet penetration into the Middle East by improving America's relationship to the Arab world by neutralizing U.S.-Israeli relations. Eisenhower and Dulles carried out a policy in the Arab-Israeli conflict identified as "friendly impartiality" toward both Israel and the Arabs. Since neither the president nor the secretary of state viewed themselves as responsible for the recognition of Israel as a state, they felt less compulsion to pursue the previous Democratic administration's formula of a "special relationship with Israel." Second, unlike his Democratic predecessors, Eisenhower won the presidency independent of any political obligation toward the Jewish community in the United States. Seventy-five percent of American Jewry voted Democratic in 1952, and an even higher percentage did so in 1956. He thus felt free to pursue a policy he perceived to be in America's national interest.

Furthermore, as Marvin Feuerwerger points out, Eisenhower had never been exposed to Jewish political pressures before his presidency, as he might well have had he served in Congress, as many presidents do before they reach the Oval Office. But he came to the White House from a military career. When he first encountered Jewish clout as president, he acted defensively as if provoked. In a cabinet meeting on November 12, 1953, when the subject of the Middle East came up, he told those present that he would "never use foreign policy for domestic political advantage as Truman had done." During the Suez Crisis, Eisenhower wrote the following to his childhood friend Swede Hazlett:

> The administration had realized that Ben-Gurion might try to take advantage of the pre-campaign period to launch a war because of the importance that so many politicians in the past have attached to our Jewish vote. I gave strict orders to the State Department that they should inform Israel that we'd handle our affairs exactly as though we didn't have a Jew in America. The welfare—best interests of our country were to be the sole criteria on which we operated.¹

The third reason for the weakness of Jewish influence had to do with the lack of direct access to the president by Jewish leaders, as well as the absence of individuals sympathetic to Zionist goals among the president's foreign policy advisers. While Abba Hillel Silver was close
to the Republican party, his support of Robert Taft for the party's nomination did not particularly endear him to Eisenhower.

A check of the roster of Jews serving in the Eisenhower administration reveals the following names: Max Rabb, secretary of the cabinet and liaison between the administration and the American Jewish community; Arthur Burns, economic adviser; Jack Martin, in charge of relations with Congress; Simon Sobeloff, solicitor general; Charles Metzner, executive director to the attorney general; Lewis L. Strauss, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission; Louis Rothschild, general counsel of the Federal Maritime Board; and Meyer Kestenbaum, member of the Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. Given the posts they held, in all likelihood they had no input in foreign policy formulations devised primarily in the State Department and carried out with presidential approval by Secretary of State Dulles. Maxwell Rabb and Admiral Lewis Strauss were close to the president and might have won the president's attention on matters concerning Israel had they tried to influence him, but I found no evidence to that effect. Both were members of the American Jewish Committee, which, while not Zionist, was certainly not anti-Zionist. Rabb was chairman of the government division of the UJA from 1953 to 1958 and president of Congregation Temple Emanu-El in New York. Lewis Strauss was treasurer of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and a member of its executive committee; later he became a sponsor of the American Society for Technion Israel, the MIT of Israel. In all likelihood they told the president that most American Jews were non-Zionists, which was true then as it is today, and the president confused non-Zionism with anti-Zionism. Indeed, both Eisenhower and Dulles were far more comfortable thinking that the views held by the president of the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism, Lessing Rosenwald, and its executive director, Elmer Berger, represented Jewish opinion in the United States. They supported the administration's position in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and were strongly anti-Zionist.

In a letter to the secretary of state after his return from a fact-finding mission to the Middle East during May 1953, Rosenwald concurred with Dulles's statement that "the Israeli factor and the association of the United States in the minds of the people of the area with French and British colonial and imperialistic policies are millstones around our neck. Today the Arab people are afraid that the United States will
back the new State of Israel in aggressive expansion. They are more fearful of Zionism than of Communism.” According to Rosenwald, “one of the most dangerous aspects of Zionism has been the attempt by the Zionists to persuade vast numbers of American Jews of the logic that argues that the Arabs are the enemy of Israel and therefore the enemy of the United States. Nothing could be further from the truth.”

The secretary of state often expressed the administration’s gratitude to the American Council for Judaism for its support: “I appreciate the support which you have constantly given to the President’s policy of sympathetic and impartial friendship in our relations with the Middle East.” President Eisenhower praised the American Council for Judaism for its efforts, stating that it had “contributed greatly to a better understanding of the cultural, moral and special values of Judaism.”

ACJ conventions became forums for American senior officials to express their criticism of Israel. All in all, throughout the Eisenhower years, ACJ’s memoranda were eagerly received by the State Department. Yet, when American Zionist leaders such as Abba Hillel Silver, and pro-Israel but non-Zionists such as Jacob Blaustein, president of the American Jewish Committee, or Philip Klutznick, president of B’nai B’rith, in meetings with Dulles and in letters, protested the pro-Arab tilt in U.S. policy, they were politely listened to but their views carried no weight. At least during his first term Eisenhower tended to look at those who disagreed with his Mid-East policies as Zionist “extremists” who did not necessarily represent the views of American Jewry as a whole. That, however, was far from the truth.

Even though the American Zionist movement in the 1950’s appeared to be fragmented and its formal membership dispersed throughout various groups within the Jewish community, its actions on behalf of the State of Israel found overwhelming support among the non-Zionist American Jews who saw themselves as “friends of Israel.” Marshall Sklare’s Riverton Study in the early 1950’s showed that ninety-four percent of the adults and eighty-seven percent of the children felt positively about Israel, and he concluded that all Riverton Jews, even “those indifferent to Zionism as an ideological movement feel favorably disposed towards the State of Israel.” They saw it at least as a place of refuge for homeless Jews and recognized their responsibility to help their coreligionists. Similar studies conducted in other Jewish communities showed the same results. Support for Israel
was demonstrated regularly by the success of fund-raising within the community. In 1947, the United Jewish Appeal raised approximately $170,000,000, about half of it being allotted to Palestine. In the five years that followed, the new State of Israel received $416,000,000 from American Jews, two-thirds coming from funds raised by the UJA.

The shared attitudes of Jewish identification and support for Israel bound together virtually all American Jewish organizations into a potentially strong pressure group, the low membership in the Zionist organizations notwithstanding. All that was needed was to translate feelings into action, galvanize all Jewish organizations, Zionist and pro-Israel, into one unified whole.

The emergence of some unifying central authority representing the majority of American Jewry began to take shape by late 1954 due mainly to two factors. Ironically, John Foster Dulles was instrumental in bringing about the first one! He urged Jewish leaders to unite in one group rather than having competing Jewish organizations repeatedly call on him. He also claimed that his mail pointed to a serious division in American Jewry's attitude toward Israel, apparently according the same importance to letters from national Jewish organizations as to those coming from the infinitesimal American Council for Judaism. Dulles eventually regretted the powerful pressure a unified American Jewry put on the administration. Second, the Israeli government needed an agency through which it could consult and advise American Jewry on matters of mutual concern. In addition, Israel very much wanted to involve the powerful non-Zionist groups, such as the American Jewish Committee and B'nai B'rith, in lobbying on its behalf.

Accordingly, on April 16, 1953, Abba Eban, the Israeli ambassador to the United States, met the presidents of some of the leading Jewish organizations. Subsequently, Nahum Goldmann, Maurice Edelstajn, Philip Klutznick, Emanuel Neumann, and others organized an informal "presidents' club" which became the forerunner of the present-day Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations consisting of thirty-four members representing Zionists and non-Zionists, fraternal groups, welfare boards, and all three religious branches.

On March 5–6, 1955, leaders of sixteen Jewish organizations from twenty-two states convened an extraordinary conference in Washing-
ton to review the whole complex of American-Israeli relations. This general conference was the first to be called by a group of presidents of American Jewish organizations on matters pertaining to Israel. According to Philip Klutznick, president of B’nai B’rith and chairman of the opening session, the conference was extraordinary in another respect; for the first time since the creation of the State of Israel, representatives of the overwhelming majority of affiliated American Jews sought and secured the opportunity to sit in public session with representatives of the administration to consider the urgent aspects of American policy in the Middle East. Such honor was previously reserved for the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism.

The purpose of the conference was to impress upon the administration the support of American Jewry for Israel to and hopefully revise U.S. Middle Eastern policy. In its resolutions, it called upon the U.S. government to make a determined effort to bring about direct negotiations between Israel and the Arab countries aiming at a peaceful settlement. In the absence of an Arab-Israeli peace, the conference urged the suspension of arms shipments to the Middle East, particularly in view of the fact that no arms were being given to Israel. Finally, it called for the inclusion of Israel in any defense arrangements for the region and for continued economic and technical assistance to Israel, something the participants credited and even praised the administration for doing.

The significance of this gathering lay in the show of unity on behalf of Israel exhibited by the representatives of most of American Jewry. It became obvious to the participants that working together they would be far more effective than if ten or fifteen organizations separately expressed a common point of view with all the resultant overlapping confusion and waste of time and energy. The State Department became aware now more than ever before where the overwhelming majority of American Jewry stood in relation to Israel. And while the newly found expression of unity did not change basic American policy in the Middle East, it nonetheless helped prevent later on the imposition of economic sanctions on Israel and its complete alienation from the United States in the aftermath of the Sinai Campaign.

The most extensive political activity by Zionist and non-Zionist organizations during the period of the mid-1950’s centered on reaching political elites with the hope of bringing about American arms
sales to Israel as well as the development of some type of special security arrangement between the two countries which would ensure Israel's security needs. The main theme of pro-Israeli pressure on the administration and Congress was to emphasize that the Egyptians, having accepted arms from the Soviet bloc, had become a threat to the free world as well as to Israel.

Such calls gained support from important quarters of American opinion. On January 28, 1956, a group of Democrats led by Eleanor Roosevelt issued a statement urging that U.S. arms be sent to Israel. It was endorsed by other political figures, such as former President Harry Truman and labor leader Walter Reuther, vice-president of the AFL-CIO. While the administration still refused to conclude a full-scale formal arms arrangements with Israel, for fear of alienating the Arabs, such pressure had some effect. On April 11, 1956, Dulles and Eisenhower approved the sale of an additional twelve French Mystere IV jets to Israel. A day later, Dulles, in a telephone call with an aide, agreed to “license for early shipment of some anti-aircraft and radar which they [Israel] have applied for.”

But the most crucial test of the American Jewish community's support of Israel came during and after the Sinai Campaign. The Israelis launched their attack against Egypt on October 29, 1956, in collusion with Britain and France, after the Israeli prime minister, Ben-Gurion, had been advised by Eisenhower not to undertake any action threatening the peace. The president was furious that the British, French, and Israelis would have recourse to what he considered eighteenth-century methods of settling disputes. In private, Eisenhower and Dulles concluded that Ben Gurion had initiated the military action only a few days before the election in the United States because of his “overestimate of my [Eisenhower's] desire to avoid offending the many voters who might have either sentimental or blood relations with Israel. I emphatically corrected any misapprehension of this kind he might have.” The administration was irate and utterly uncompromising. It insisted on an immediate halt to the operation and took instant steps to enforce its decision.

In addition to issuing a series of direct messages to the three allied countries urging their withdrawal from Egypt, U.S. moves were channeled through the United Nations. Within the Security Council, Henry Cabot Lodge urged prompt “action to determine whether a breach of
peace has occurred, to have a cease fire ordered immediately and to obtain the withdrawal of Israeli forces." A resolution presented by the United States calling for the immediate cessation of hostilities in Egypt was vetoed by Britain and France. Then, on November 1, the United States introduced in the General Assembly a cease-fire resolution outlining a series of procedures for the withdrawal of forces, freedom of navigation, and the opening of the Suez Canal. A follow-up resolution (Nov. 7) created a U.N. Emergency Force. On November 7 additional resolutions were introduced for a cease-fire and demanding the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Egypt.

In light of the administration's anti-Israeli position, the Suez Crisis presented American Jewry with a major dilemma. A conflict of interest emerged pitting specific Zionist-Jewish interests for a secure Israel against the broader American policy objectives built on regional neutrality and world stability. In the first twenty-four hours of fighting it appeared to American Jewish organizations, unaware as yet of the British and French involvement, that the fighting was only between Israel and Egypt. Thus on October 31, 1956, the heads of the leading Jewish groups gathered in New York for an emergency meeting and attempted to justify Israel's actions as a war in self-defense in view of its encirclement following the signing of the Egyptian-Syrian-Jordanian pact. They appealed to the U.S. government for a fresh approach to the Middle East conflict. But on November 5, when the British and the French invaded Egypt, U.S. Jewry became aware of the wider scope of the operation, which at that moment seemed to be far beyond Israel's defense requirements. In view of the new circumstances they faced difficulties in explaining Israel's actions. Their loss of credibility made it easier for the State Department to disregard proposals and suggestions coming from the representatives of Jewish organizations.

A split within the Jewish community took place as to the approach to be taken in dealing with the administration. The Zionist community and especially the Zionist Organization of America sought to identify entirely with Israel by developing an immediate and decisive propaganda campaign directed at the American public and designed to get the United States to extend "full and forthright support for Israel's defense." In a nationwide broadcast over all stations of NBC on November 4,
1956, ZOA President Emanuel Neumann noted that in going to war against the “Hitler of the Nile,” the Israelis were simply continuing “an old war, launched eight years ago by the Arab states.” He indirectly chided the administration by stating that Israel “had no military alliance and no security pact of any kind to fall back on.” Abba Hillel Silver was somewhat more blunt as he said: “When the Suez Canal was seized by Nasser, . . . Mr. Dulles made sure that nothing would be done about it, the Administration gave Israel neither the security pact it had granted to some forty other countries, nor . . . did it grant the imperiled young state the right to acquire arms in this country to defend itself.”

In contrast to the Zionist position specifically challenging and criticizing administration policies, the majority of Jewish organizations shifted their emphasis away from firm statements which justified the Israeli attack and focused instead on finding ways for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. As a result they placed themselves as mediators between Israel and the administration. On November 3, Irving Engel, Jacob Blaustein, and Joseph Proskauer, the president and honorary vice-presidents of the American Jewish Committee, wrote to Secretary Dulles urging him to encourage direct negotiations between Israel and Egypt. They contended that “to return to the status quo ante is to restore the very conditions which have caused bloodshed, misery and turmoil.” The Presidents’ Conference, meeting in emergency session on November 17–18, urged that direct peace negotiations be launched and called on the United States to assume the role as leader of the coalition of free peoples and seek to “lay the basis for direct Arab-Israeli negotiations.”

Clearly, the Presidents’ Conference approach as a “mediator” in the crisis was far more practical in view of the fact that President Eisenhower had just been reelected by a landslide and polls showed that a majority of the American public supported the administration’s policies insisting on immediate Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai. In a mid-November 1956 Roper survey of 598 American respondents, only 18.5 percent replied in the affirmative when asked, “Do you think Israel was or was not justified in sending troops to Egypt?” While 49.6 percent had no opinion on the matter, 31 percent felt that the Israelis were not justified. A Gallup poll released on November 14 showed similar trends. Editorial opinions in newspapers of major cities in the
United States showed widespread disagreements with Israel’s policies. Needless to say, Israel’s standing in American public opinion had suffered as a result of its attack on Egypt in coordination with Britain and France. Israel was no longer viewed as fighting for survival but perceived as using force for the sake of territorial aggrandizement, in this case the conquest of the Sinai.

This unfavorable public reaction to Israel no doubt induced the Eisenhower administration to proceed with plans for the imposition of sanctions against Israel as a means of bringing about its unconditional withdrawal from the Sinai in accordance with the U.N. resolutions. On February 5, 1957, Dulles announced that the United States would seriously consider the possibility of imposing economic sanctions on Israel through the United Nations. On February 16, Ambassador Lodge indicated that the question of sanctions against Israel would be introduced in the United Nations during the next few days. According to Sherman Adams, Eisenhower’s chief of staff, the United States could no longer tolerate any further delays in the Israeli response to withdraw. In his words, such action by Israel “would endanger western influence by convincing Middle Easterners that U.S. policy toward the area was in the last analysis controlled by Jewish influence in the United States.” Eisenhower, in a conversation with Adams, went as far as preferring a resolution which would call on members of the United Nations to suspend not just governmental aid but also private assistance to Israel.

Leaders of the Jewish community, shocked by the administration’s new moves, went into action. On February 7, an emergency meeting of Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform religious groups called for a general strike to protest against the possibility of sanctions. The Presidents’ Conference drafted telegrams of protest to President Eisenhower. Individual Jews were called upon to send telegrams and letters of protest to members of Congress. Rallies were held, and non-Jewish organizations, such as the AFL-CIO, were called upon to protest the anti-Israeli policy. Such actions had an impact on Congress, public opinion, and ultimately the administration.

In this atmosphere of threats to Israel, a popular revulsion of feeling against unfairness to Israel by the administration erupted in the United States. For the problem was not Israel’s unwillingness to withdraw but the tough, uncompromising insistence of the administration on un-
conditional Israeli withdrawal without any security guarantees. Israel's demand for such guarantees found a great deal of sympathy and understanding in the press and especially in congressional circles.

Helped by the shift in public opinion in Israel's favor, leaders of American Jewish organizations began their battle against the administration's proposed sanctions. They converged on members of Congress urging them to oppose administration policies. Foremost was Emanuel Neumann, president of the ZOA, who spent the first week of February in Washington meeting congressional leaders and some members of the administration. He noted that antisanctions sentiment was gathering strength, particularly on Capitol Hill, where congressional opinion on this issue was sharply at variance with that prevailing in the State Department. He was confident enough to predict that "if the Administration should attempt to go further, it is likely to run into a storm of protest."25

His work and that of others seemed to have borne fruit. On February 7, seventy-five Democratic members of the House of Representatives and forty-one Republicans called on the administration to refrain from imposing sanctions on Israel. On the floor of the Senate, many senators registered their disapproval of the policy of enforced sanctions. Among them were Senators Symington, Humphrey, Saltonstall, Sparkman, and Javits. On February 11, the Senate Democratic Policy Committee unanimously called on the administration to resist U.N. efforts in that direction. The same day the Republican leaders of the Senate called on the administration to abandon all efforts to support the United Nations in any economic sanctions against Israel.26

Faced with such an avalanche of criticism, the State Department was seeking a solution that would extricate it from the policy it had boxed itself into. On February 11, Abba Eban was handed an aide-memoire by Secretary Dulles declaring that the United States would help assure Israel the right of passage in the Gulf of Aqaba, consider the gulf an international waterway, and that the United Nations Emergency Forces should move into the area between Israel and the Gaza Strip. While this aide-memoire went some way toward meeting Israel's terms for withdrawal, it fell short of the overall Israeli demand. Such guarantees were offered to Israel after withdrawal, whereas Israel persisted in its demand for guarantees prior to full withdrawal. The aide-memoire in its original form was rejected by Israel, causing fur-
ther strain between Israel and the administration. Additional pressures on behalf of Israel were exerted on the administration.

The support of Lyndon Johnson, the Senate majority leader, a most influential senator and already a well-known supporter of Israel, was won when the Washington representatives of the American Jewish Committee, Nat Goldrich and Sy Kennen, director of AIPAC in Washington, met with Johnson's bureau chief. He advised them to have the Jewish community in Texas and their friends dispatch telegrams to Johnson's office urging him to do his utmost against administration policies. Kennencontacted Jewish leaders in Texas who delivered messages in synagogues to that effect. Johnson contacted Republican Minority Leader William Knowland and in a bipartisan show of unity wrote to Dulles: "The U. N. cannot apply one rule for the strong and another for the weak, it cannot organize its economic weight against the little state when it has not previously made even a pretense of doing so against a large state." Johnson and other Democrats applied political pressure on the White House by delaying Senate approval of the Eisenhower Doctrine—crucial to the administration's Mid-East policy. Knowland, after seeing the president on February 20, indicated that he would resign his position as a member of the U. S. delegation to the United Nations if this country chose to pursue a policy favoring sanctions.

A furious John Foster Dulles complained, as he put it, "how almost impossible it is in this country to carry out a foreign policy not approved by the Jews. Marshall and Forrestal learned that. I am going to try and have one." In a conversation with Lodge, Dulles spoke of the terrific control the Jews had over the news media and the barrage and the pressure which the Jews had built up on congressmen. Ninety percent of the mail received at the White House protesting the planned imposition of sanctions was from Jews.

Faced with congressional and public opposition, the administration began to relent from its uncompromising position "that a nation which attacks and occupies foreign territory in the face of U. N. disapproval could not be allowed to impose conditions on its withdrawal." In laborious consultations between Washington and Jerusalem, during the final days of February 1957, Dulles presented Eban with final proposals. It stipulated U. N. responsibility for border security in the Gaza Strip along the international boundary between Egypt and Isra-
el. It offered international guarantees for noninterference with Israeli shipping in the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba. The United States also endorsed the Israeli position, "interference by armed forces with ships of Israeli flag exercising free and innocent passage in the Gulf of Aqaba and the Straits of Tiran will be regarded by Israel as an attack entitling it to exercise its inherent right of self defense under Article 51 of the Charter and to take all measures as are necessary to ensure the free and innocent passage of its ships in the Gulf and its Straits." Accordingly, on March 1, 1957, Golda Meir, the Israeli foreign minister, declared in the General Assembly Israel's withdrawal of all its forces from Sinai and Gaza under the terms agreed to in Washington.

Thus, for the first time since the creation of the State of Israel, the American Jewish community was united during a time of acute crisis and won a decisive political battle for Israel against a determined administration. But it must be stressed that it came only after Jewish leaders were able to make a compelling case and win Congress and public opinion to their side.

Having won one victory, Jewish leaders went ahead to plead Israel's case with Congress and compel the administration to introduce changes in its Middle East Resolution. In a statement prepared for the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Armed Services, Dr. Israel Goldstein of the American Jewish Congress outlined the organization's response to the Eisenhower Doctrine which represented the views of the overwhelming majority of organized American Jewry. In his view the doctrine in its original form was inadequate because it did not address itself to the basic conflict in the Middle East; the doctrine failed to take into consideration the existence of such exacerbating problems as the blockade of the Suez Canal, the problem of the Arab refugees, and the conflict between Israel and the Arab states. Nor was there any reference to American willingness to defend Israel in case of an Arab attack against her.

As a result of Johnson's intervention, the administration went along with an amendment proposed by Senator Mansfield which indirectly tried to allay Israel's security fears by stating that the United States strongly supported the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of all countries in the Middle East. Secretary Dulles sought to reassure American Jewry when he stated that Israel was the bene-
ficiary of the declaration made by President Eisenhower in April 1956, that the United States would come to the assistance of any country that was attacked. This statement was implicitly formalized to Israel's benefit within the framework of the Eisenhower Doctrine.

And yet, during a meeting of the National Security Council on January 22, 1958, with Eisenhower present, Dulles critically referred to Israel as the "darling of world Jewry." He declared: "... the constant influx of Jewish refugees into Israel, swelling the population of that little country was regarded by the Arabs as a sure sign of eventual territorial expansion and that nothing he could think of would please the Arab states more than if some action could be taken by us and the British and the French to place a limitation of very drastic nature on further immigration to Israel."

George Allen, former assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs and now head of the U.S. Information Agency, agreed with Dulles. He even suggested the removal of tax deductibility from contributions made in the United States to Israel, as one method of limiting funds destined to help Jewish immigration.

Fortunately, Lewis L. Strauss, who happened to attend the meeting, took the unusual step of speaking out for the first time on a subject about which he previously had remained silent. Referring to the remarks made by Dulles and Allen, he lamented the refusal of the world, including the United States, to accept the survivors of Hitler's gas chambers, while only Israel accorded them a home and shelter. Moreover, he declared, persecuted Jews from the Arab countries could find a haven only in Israel. To hinder their settlement by limiting philanthropic activity in the United States through legal means "will be resented by people of both political parties, of all religions and all nationalities. I cannot more strongly urge that this is an impolitic and inhumane and an un-American proposal." After a moment of embarrassed silence a stunned Dulles agreed that in all likelihood his proposal would not appease the Arabs. Turning to Strauss, he added, "you are undoubtedly right—in saying that, it is also unfair." Allen later apologized; he became convinced that his proposal was an "improper course."

Based on available evidence, Strauss's stand was the most eloquent and effective presentation on behalf of Israel made by a prominent American Jew and member of Eisenhower's inner circle. His coura-
geous intervention might well have prevented a disastrous situation in American-Israeli relations.

By early 1958 the strain in American-Israeli relations subsided. It became apparent to the administration that despite its condemnation of the British, French, and Israeli attack on Egypt and its successful effort to save Egypt from a military debacle, Nasser showed no gratitude for American favors. On the contrary, he rejected the Eisenhower Doctrine and undermined American interests in the area. Nasser was viewed by Washington as the Soviets' principal vehicle and ally. Nasser, and not Israel, stood in the way of checking the spread of Russian influence in the region.

Jewish leaders pointed to Israel's pro-Western, democratic character, trying to impress on the administration, Congress, and public opinion that support for Israel was not only morally right but also in American interests. Such an argument became more and more acceptable in view of the frequent crises in the Middle East due to Nasserite subversions of pro-Western governments. The United States began to appreciate Israel as the only stable pro-Western country in the region. The improvement in the relationship between the two countries was expressed in increases of American aid for development purposes and greater presidential sympathy and understanding for Israel's security problems.

Thus only by late 1959 and early 1960 had American Jewry succeeded in laying the basis for a special relationship between Israel and the United States with regard to Israel's military security and territorial integrity. That situation emerged gradually after a rather long period of Jewish lack of influence on U.S. Mid-East policies.

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Notes


9. John Foster Dulles Papers, Box 67, October 12, 1953 and December 30, 1953; also Dulles to Rabbi Hillel Silver, July 13, 1953. (Deposited at Mudd Library, Princeton University, Princeton, N. J.) After seeing Dulles on October 27, 1953, Klutznick, in a letter to the secretary of state, made the following comments: “While I cannot bring myself to agree with the judgment reached by your department in the withholding of aid to Israel, I would be remiss in a sense of duty to myself if I did not express to you my sincere appreciation for the time that you took to discuss the matter with our delegation.” The meeting did not influence or change U.S. policy in any way. These meetings between the secretary of state and Jewish leaders came as a result of what was viewed by many as a pro-Arab tilt in U.S. policy during 1953. For example, Dulles's call for the return of some Palestinian refugees to the “area presently controlled by Israel,” his indirect appeal for the internationalization of Jerusalem, and strong American condemnation of the Israeli attack on the Jordanian village of Qiby during October 14–15, 1953. On October 20, in view of Israel’s refusal to comply with the request of the chief of staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) to suspend work on its hydroelectric project on the upper Jordan River, the United States cancelled economic aid to Israel. Even though the grant was reinstated, the fact remained that the United States used its economic power to coerce Israel.

10. For the exact figures of membership in the leading Zionist organizations in 1948, see Melvin Urofsky, *We Are One: American Jewry and Israel* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1978), p. 279.


13. The two officials representing the administration were George V. Allen, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern, South Asian and African affairs, and Norman S. Paul, regional director for Near East foreign operations administration.


15. Thus, by the mid-1950's the operational structure of the organized Jewish community on behalf of Israel consisted of eighteen organizations that operated independently and at the same time belonged to three umbrella agencies functioning as coordinators for Jewish political action: the American Zionist Council, the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, and the National Community Relations Advisory Council, whose local branches engaged in pro-Israeli activity.


21. Ibid., pp. 1–3.
24. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., February 20, 1957.
34. Memorandum for the files of Lewis L. Strauss, January 22, 1958. I am indebted to the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati Campus, Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, for calling my attention to this very important document.
Unsere Leit ("Our People"): Anna Hillkowitz and the Development of the East European Jewish Woman Professional in America

Jeanne Abrams

Jewish women in America have traditionally been active in a myriad of benevolent organizations and institutions in the Jewish community, generally occupying voluntary positions. This phenomenon has been exhibited in the history of the early Denver Jewish community as well. In 1872, wives, daughters, and sisters of middle- and upper-class Denver Jewish men formed the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society, and later, in 1893, the Denver chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women, which was devoted largely to settlement work and educational projects. Historian June Sochen has noted that the achievements of volunteers in general have usually gone unrecorded in American as well as Jewish history. Sochen has further maintained that the role of Jewish women in philanthropic organizations in particular has received only cursory attention in historical accounts. The purpose of this essay is to bring to light the story of one such volunteer turned professional woman. Anna Hillkowitz became a volunteer for the Jewish Consumptives' Relief Society, one of the most vital early Denver benevolent organizations, even before the institution formally opened its doors as a tuberculosis sanatorium in September of 1904. Not infrequently, being a volunteer was a stepping-stone for a woman to a paid position, as in the case of Anna Hillkowitz. As early as 1906 she was hired as a major fund-raiser for the JCRS, receiving a salary equal to if not higher than her male coworkers. What makes Anna Hillkowitz's story especially significant are her Eastern European immigrant origins and the fact that her letters were fortunately retained for posterity. Her correspondence, written while she was employed by the JCRS, forms one of the most fascinating sections of the JCRS Archives.
In order to better understand Anna Hillkowitz's role, a brief history of the JCRS is necessary. The Jewish Consumptives’ Relief Society was founded in 1904 by a group of twenty Jewish immigrant tradesmen, primarily to aid Jewish tuberculosis victims in all stages of the disease. For the next fifty years the JCRS Sanatorium admitted patients free of charge and served as a haven for thousands of patients afflicted with the "white plague." While the institution was to be formally nonsectarian, it was organized primarily to serve Jewish patients in a distinctively Jewish environment.

When the JCRS opened its doors in 1904, another Jewish hospital for tuberculosis treatment was already in existence in Denver. Opened in 1899, the National Jewish Hospital (NJH) had been organized and funded largely by wealthy, liberal, Reform German Jews. Like the JCRS, the NJH extended its services free of charge. However, it also imposed a rigid set of rules governing patient admissions. In accordance with the medical opinions of the era, only patients with incipient tuberculosis were admitted to the NJH. Besides a formal application and formal medical examination, the prospective patients at NJH also had to show proof of having sufficient funds to either remain in Denver through their own means of support after discharge from the hospital or to return to their original hometowns. Patients could remain at the NJH only for a limit of six months. In addition there was also a feeling on the part of many Eastern European Jews (they comprised the vast majority of the early patients at the JCRS) that NJH acted in a patronizing and condescending manner toward them, and made it particularly difficult for religious Jews to observe the laws of kashruth and Jewish festivals and rituals. The JCRS, then, would provide an alternative for destitute Eastern European Jewish tuberculosis victims seeking a more Jewish environment, as well as those persons with more severe cases of the disease who were not admitted to most sanatoria of the era. Since patients were treated at the JCRS free of charge, fund-raising would become a pivotal and perennial task.

The prime mover and guiding genius of the JCRS organization, which was principally supported and populated by Eastern European Jews of modest means, was Dr. Charles Spivak. Born in Russia, Spivak emigrated to America as a young man. In Russia he had received both an extensive talmudic as well as secular education. His departure from Russia was hastened by the Russian secret police, which sought his
arrest for involvement in radical socialist activities. In America Spivak found positions as a day laborer, typesetter, and teacher. Characteristic of his devotion to humanity, the profession he ultimately settled upon was medicine. He graduated in 1890 from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. Because of his wife’s poor health, he moved to Denver in 1895, and was soon conducting a thriving medical practice. Dr. Spivak guided the JCRS institution from its infancy, serving as executive secretary from 1904 until his death in 1927. As executive secretary, Spivak directed the institution’s financial affairs, and in this capacity he would later serve as Anna Hillkowitz’s supervisor. In light of his early experiences, Spivak’s association with the JCRS probably served to fulfill not only his commitment to *Yiddishkeit* but the humanitarian aspects of his socialist philosophy.

Although men primarily occupied the positions of elected officers and board members of the JCRS, women did serve as members of a number of vital early committees, including the JCRS Sanatorium House Committee and the Instruction and Recreation Committee. These areas, of course, had traditionally been viewed as within the sphere of women. More important than the committees, however, were the ladies’ auxiliaries of the JCRS which had sprung up in most large American cities by 1905. The importance of the contributions of these auxiliaries was documented continually in all the JCRS publications. Interestingly, of the twenty-seven Tributary Societies listed in the *First Annual Report* of the JCRS, it seems that more JCRS auxiliaries and aid societies were composed of men than women. However, within a short time, most auxiliaries became the realm solely of women.

While women may be the unsung heroines of American Jewish history, at the JCRS their contributions were apparently highly appreciated. Dr. Spivak, an amateur historian with a decided gift for narrative, also served as the unofficial recorder of the institution’s early history. In his “Secretary’s Report of 1905” he proudly noted the vital role of women at the JCRS institution.

Our Deborah’s merit particular mention: Ladies auxiliary societies were started in various cities, and, whenever societies were organized with the object of helping the J.C.R.S., the women of Israel took a most active part.

Our local Ladies’ Auxiliary Society, headed by Mrs. Louis Levy, has been a helpful adjunct to our Society from the beginning, and its usefulness, whether in
the collection of funds or in the management of the Sanatorium, is being manifested every day more and more.9

The subject of the activities and importance of the women’s contributions to the JCRS as not merely confined to the organization’s early years. Almost all publications concerning the institution (which closed its doors as a tuberculosis sanatorium in 1954)10 reported in great detail on the work of the auxiliaries, often describing them as an unparalleled pillar of support.

The history of the JCRS ladies’ auxiliaries is worthy of a major study in itself, but Anna Hillkowitz, a paid financial solicitor for the organization in the institution’s early years, is the major focus of this article. Committed at a young age to philanthropic work on behalf of her fellow Russian immigrants, by 1906 Hillkowitz was traveling the United States soliciting contributions for the JCRS and, not incidentally, earning a respectable income.

Anna Hillkowitz was born in Russia, probably around 1880. At the age of six she emigrated to America with her parents, Rabbi Elias (Elya) and Rebecca (Hindel) Hillkowitz.11 Settling in Cincinnati, Rabbi Hillkowitz founded an Orthodox synagogue where he served as rabbi until asthma forced him to move to Denver’s dry and sunny climate in 1890.12 Anna, along with three of her siblings, accompanied the family to Denver; two adult children remained behind in Cincinnati.13 In Cincinnati Anna Hillkowitz had attended public schools, and she continued her education in Denver, graduating from East Denver High School in 1897. Following her graduation she entered a library-training school and later secured a position as a member of the Denver Public Library staff. According to one source she was the only Jewish woman of the era in Denver to enter that profession.14

Apparently education was a highly valued commodity in the Hillkowitz family. Rudolf Glanz has pointed out the importance of American educational institutions to the Eastern European immigrants in general.15 Soon after his arrival, Rabbi Hillkowitz, noted for his erudition, was accepted as the “dean” of Denver’s Orthodox rabbis.16 Of the six Hillkowitz children, Anna became a librarian; two sons, Philip and William, became prominent physicians; and a third son, Solomon, became manager of the Denver Vegetable Grower’s Association. No information is available on the other two daughters, Rose Hillko-
The Hillkowitz children’s education may have speeded the family’s upward mobility. In 1893 the family resided in Denver’s West Side, known as the Jewish “ghetto,” but by 1900 they had moved to the more fashionable East Side neighborhood.

Anna identified closely with her Jewish heritage. As an active member of the Young Women’s Jewish Alliance, she frequently visited the Colorado State Industrial School to instruct young Jewish boys in the history and customs of Judaism. Somewhat of a bluestocking, Anna also presented a number of papers before the Denver chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women, of which she was an active member. Anna’s membership in the early NCJW is significant. It indicates that even though she was of Eastern European origins, she was able to participate fully in an organization which was mainly composed of Denver’s German Reform Jewish elite. Anna had been educated in American schools, and while she apparently remained traditional in her religious observances, on a cultural level she seemingly was able to easily and comfortably interact with these women. Her literary abilities were also recognized, as in 1905 she was asked to write an article on the history of Jewish businessmen and merchants in America which was published in the *Denver Jewish Outlook*.

The Hillkowitz family had been instrumental in the founding of the JCRS. Anna’s brother Philip, a leading Denver pathologist and bacteriologist, served as the institution’s president from 1904 until his death in 1948. Anna’s father, Rabbi Elias Hillkowitz, had served in 1904 along with Jenny Charsky Spivak (Mrs. Charles Spivak) and Abraham Kobey as one of the institution’s three incorporators. It was Rabbi Hillkowitz who had suggested the JCRS’s fifty-year motto, “He Who Saves One Life Is As If He Had Preserved the Whole World” (Talmud). Anna was involved with the JCRS from the beginning. The *First Annual Report* lists her as a member of the JCRS Instruction and Recreation Committee, and Dr. Spivak recorded that the furnishings for the first JCRS tent-cottages for housing patients were donated, “principally through the untiring shnorrering [begging] expeditions of the President of the Denver Ladies’ Auxiliary J.C.R.S., Mrs. Louis Levy, and the Misses Leonore Moses and Anna Hillkowitz.” Soon she would become a paid worker.

In 1906 Anna Hillkowitz took a leave of absence from her position
on the staff of the Denver Public Library to become a traveling “field secretary,” or fund-raiser, for the JCRS. Anna was certainly not the only Jewish woman to have held this type of position at the turn of the century. In Denver, for example, Mrs. Seraphine Pisko, a widow of German descent, held the powerful position of executive financial secretary of the National Jewish Hospital. In Chicago, Goldie Stone, a Lithuanian who came to the United States in 1880, became the financial secretary for the Orthodox Federated Charities of Chicago. When her position was challenged as being too difficult for a woman, her male coworkers defended her, pointing out that biblical women such as Deborah and Miriam, for example, had occupied high positions of leadership among the Jews.24

While Anna Hillkowitz perhaps did not occupy an unusual type of occupation, she is probably rare in having left historians vivid documentation of her experiences. We are fortunate that over two hundred letters written by Anna Hillkowitz to Charles Spivak, and vice versa, survive in the JCRS Archives. Hillkowitz’s letters chronicle her travels throughout the United States in 1906 and 1907 and the difficulties she encountered in raising funds for the young hospital. Her letters are particularly relevant because they reveal the story of an early professional woman of Eastern European origins. Although she obviously became rapidly acculturated and Americanized, she still retained a significant degree of commitment to traditional Judaism and certainly to Yiddish culture which is apparent in the correspondence. In order to prevent possible misunderstanding, a definition of terms is appropriate here. The use of the adjective “traditional” to describe Hillkowitz’s religious views is meant to denote her general outlook. It seems probable that Hillkowitz did personally observe many Jewish traditions and customs. However, it is doubtful that she followed strict Orthodox religious practices. It is highly unlikely, for example, that an Orthodox Jewish woman at the turn of the century would have traveled across the country on her own, particularly speaking before mixed audiences.

Anna Hillkowitz’s letters, written while she traveled across the country, demonstrate that the position of JCRS field secretary combined the skills of a public relations person, accountant, and fund-raiser. Apparently a forceful and independent woman, she canvassed Jewish communities across the nation on her own, generally staying in
local hotels and making her own traveling and financial arrangements. Her main goal, of course, was to spread the JCRS “message” and collect as much money as possible for the young organization. As mentioned previously, she had taken a leave of absence from her work as a librarian to operate as a field worker for the JCRS. It is obvious from her correspondence that she took her position seriously and was concerned both with supporting herself and with aiding the organization from a deep sense of responsibility for the indigent Jewish consumptives at the JCRS. In a letter to Dr. Spivak, dated August 9, 1906, Hillkowitz discussed at length the pay she received and her motives for working for the institution: “I solemnly assure you were it for anything else but the J.C.R.S. I would not do it for $3,000 per year for another cause. If it were for the money there was in it I would have been back in Denver ere this. . . . Had I the means my dear Doctor I would gladly travel without remuneration.” In short, Anna Hillkowitz exhibited extreme dedication to the JCRS cause but at the same time revealed clearly that she was also dependent on earning her own income.

Hillkowitz viewed herself as a professional woman, and conducted herself accordingly. She apparently carried a formal business card with her and an official letter of introduction. At times she even produced letters of testimony from prominent people in the Denver community when she thought it might help her in raising money. One such letter was written for Hillkowitz by Judge Ben Lindsey, a Progressive Denver judge of national reputation who had earned his fame through the defense of juvenile rights.

Hillkowitz’s schedule was arduous. To raise funds she accepted numerous speaking engagements in cities throughout the country at local synagogues, federations, women’s groups, and fraternal organizations. In addition, she collected funds practically door to door, and was also responsible for compiling careful lists of donations and potential donors and then forwarding the money and the bookkeeping details to Spivak in Denver.

Apparently a highly articulate and self-possessed young woman, Anna Hillkowitz was not intimidated by either large or unfriendly audiences. In a letter dated April 30, 1906, Spivak advises Hillkowitz: “You will have your hands full at the Philadelphia convention, lobbying, discussing and answering all sorts of questions fired at you.”
few days later Hillkowitz replies, "I ran around seeing delegates at both the Arbeiter Ring [Workmen's Circle] and the I.O.B.A. [International Order of B'rith Abraham]. I addressed the Arbeiter Ring with a short talk."27

While the Hillkowitz letters are largely concerned with day-to-day fund-raising procedures and mundane details, often fascinating insights emerge from the correspondence as well. One of these areas, for example, is the subject of antagonisms between the German and Eastern European Jewish communities in America at the turn of the century.

As a fund-aiser for the JCRS, Anna Hillkowitz frequently saw herself in competition with representatives of the National Jewish Hospital for the collection of money. While in the early years of the twentieth century the German Reform Jewish community generally provided the funding for NJH, and the Eastern European Orthodox segment for the JCRS, both groups also sought more general financial support. In a letter written to Spivak while she was enjoying a brief stay in Denver in February of 1906, Hillkowitz made some perceptive observations on the situation: "In the cities I visited I found that the German Jews and the Russian Jews do not and will not unite for any cause not even for the sake of charity... It is deplorable that there is such a gulf and especially that it won't be bridged even for the cause of charity."28 Hillkowitz encountered German prejudices on occasion in her role as fund-aiser for the JCRS. When approaching the St. Louis federated charities, apparently controlled by German Jews, she was questioned in minute detail and reported to Spivak: "... the prejudice of the German for the Russian is terrible... after I talked and told them everything and they had questioned me and requestioned me, one member remarked to another, sotto voce, of course (so I was told by another member): 'Even if this thing [the JCRS] was started and is run by a lot of kikes, it looks like a d[am] good thing, and we ought to help it.'"29 Despite the antagonism, however, it is significant to note that Anna was assured by the St. Louis Charities that they would donate $500 to the JCRS.30 This incident demonstrates once again that although the German Jews may have looked upon their Eastern European brethren with some disdain, they generally donated generously of their money for the welfare of their "poor cousins."

In each city Hillkowitz tried to approach leading members of both
Anna Hillkowitz

the Eastern European and German communities to solicit funding. In Rochester, New York, she met with the wife of the German Reform rabbi and reported to Spivak that “she [the rabbi’s wife] is a crank on scientific charity and just as a machine performs a function so she disperses charity—with not a bit of heart or charitable spirit.” In these comments Anna Hillkowitz is articulating the feeling, held by many Eastern European Jews at the turn of the century, that the German Reform Jews, in following the American Progressive ideals of the era, had turned charity into a purely business venture.

Generally Hillkowitz’s greatest success in raising funds came through Orthodox congregations. In Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, for example, she found that the “Orthodox Rabbi Goldstein has been the greatest help to me of any Rabbi since I have traveled for the J.C.R.S. He has even run the chances of making bad friends in order to help our cause. . . . the Reform Rabbi told me that there is nothing ‘doing’ among his congregation, that those that contribute to the NJH would certainly not give.” Yet at times, each group apparently stepped out of its normal pattern. At the end of her stay in Rochester, despite the discouragement Hillkowitz received from the Reform rabbi and his wife, she was able to report to Spivak: “The German Jews in this town have come worthy to the front.” She was not pleased with the Eastern European Jews in Rochester, however, observing: “. . . the Russians are a great disappointment to me. They have here some Russian or Polish Jews to be more correct who have a great deal of money and they are the lowest subscribers on the list.” Even so, she obviously identifies with this Eastern European segment, calling them “unsere leit” (“our people”), but rather deprecatingly observes that since these Jews are “nouveau riches” they are more interested in gaining a foothold in German society than in fulfilling their charital obligations. While Spivak shared Hillkowitz’s disdain for scientific charity as well as for those Eastern Europeans who shirked their duty, he seems to have taken some of her complaints as simply blowing off steam. After receiving her first letter from Rochester in which she describes her encounter with the wife of the Reform rabbi, Spivak observes with humor: “I am by this time accustomed to hearing your complaints about the inhabitants of the various cities in the East, and yet after you are through with a city you nevertheless succeed in turning out their pockets, so I do not feel blue about your blue letters.”
According to an article entitled “Travel Notes,” written by Hillkowitz for a 1907 issue of the JCRS publication, the Sanatorium, she visited over forty cities in her first six months as field secretary. In each community she recalled, she was greeted with hospitality she met not only with financial assistance but with moral support. Her comments indicate that a loose network of potential donors in the American Jewish community was in existence even at the turn of the century, and they provided a ready-made support system for solicitors. As early as 1906 the JCRS had appointed around two hundred “National Directors” in cities throughout the United States. These men and women were designated as “friends” of the JCRS who had accepted this honorary position to act as liaisons between the JCRS solicitor and the local community.

Anna Hillkowitz generally visited cities in the Midwest and in the East, stopping in such varied places as Philadelphia, Cincinnati, New York, Huntington, West Virginia, and Guthrie, Oklahoma. In large cities like St. Louis, she battled established Jewish federations to solicit allotments for the JCRS. Even small towns like Huntington, West Virginia, where the Jewish populations were small, were considered proper targets for fund-raising. After visiting Huntington in April of 1906, Hillkowitz remarked: “Huntington has... ten or fifteen Jewish families... who hold on to what they have with a vengeance. Nevertheless, I have a few annual subscriptions and some donations.” Apparently she was able to spark the conscience of the Huntington Jews, as a letter from Spivak to Hillkowitz written a few days later acknowledged a collection of $54.50 from that town, solicited by Anna Hillkowitz.

In collecting funds Anna Hillkowitz left no stone unturned. In Northumberland, Pennsylvania, she visited a cap factory owned by a Jew. She arranged a meeting with the factory workers, who were all Jewish, and not only collected $40 from them, but also secured a promise from the workers that they would pass a per capita tax of 10 cents per month per worker to benefit the JCRS.

While the JCRS during its early years received limited support from Jewish federations and even some money from donors of substantial wealth, the majority of the contributions came from men and women like those at the Northumberland factory who were of modest means. The JCRS was one of the first successful examples of an institu-
tion organized by Eastern European Jews for their fellow Eastern European immigrants. The underlying factor in the success of the JCRS was the ability of the organization to tap financial sources in almost all sections of the United States, from people in virtually every socioeconomic group. As noted previously, however, the vast majority of contributions were small; thus the JCRS attempted to interest large numbers of men and women in its cause. Literally thousands of receipts acknowledging the numerous donations, which were sometimes as small as 5 and 10 cents, fill the JCRS files.

The decision to concentrate on raising funds among the lower classes was not a haphazard one, but rather reflects the basic philosophy of Dr. Spivak and other JCRS leaders. When Hillkowitz writes Spivak concerning her hope to approach a number of wealthy Jews for contributions, Spivak firmly replies: “I think you should abandon entirely the idea of making any strenuous effort to meet our rich brethren. If our Institution is to be a peoples’ institution, it should be supported by the people only. Let us collect our moneys in dollars and quarters.” This advice was not new to Hillkowitz, and as a matter of record she had in reality been collecting funds in this manner for some time. In January of 1906, for example, she had written Spivak about her success in collecting money in Wichita, Kansas: “Our Russian Jews there are all paying twenty cents a month for the benefit of the JCRS with the exception of Mrs. Bronstein who pays forty cents a month.” Even though the “Russian Jews” amounted to only eleven people and their contribution was the modest sum of $2.40 per month, they appeared to be worthy of mention in Hillkowitz’s view.

Anna Hillkowitz’s professional relationship with Spivak is interesting. Although at times he criticizes her for her failure to bring in more money, or for mistakes in her bookkeeping, he gives her a great deal of freedom in carrying out her duties, particularly in determining where and how she will solicit funds. The fact that she was a woman apparently did not influence Spivak’s opinion of her as a fund-raiser. Seemingly she was judged simply in terms of her success, i.e., how much money she did or did not bring in. When she “brought in the dough,” as Spivak put it, he wrote to commend her and assure her she was his best field worker. After receiving one check for $100 that Hillkowitz had solicited in Oklahoma, Spivak wrote: “Hurray! Three cheers for the Field Secretary of the JCRS. You have done wonderfully well.”
When Anna Hillkowitz's intake of funds fell short of expected goals, Spivak was also quick to show his disapproval. In a letter written to Hillkowitz on May 23, 1906, Spivak pointed out that she received a salary of $50 per month more than one of her male coworkers, Mr. Dolitsky, yet she had collected almost $900 less than Dolitsky during a three month-period. In the letter we are informed that her pay was about $200 per month, a respectable sum for the era. At no time did Spivak make any distinction concerning her role as a female fund-raiser, nor did he imply any connection between Dolitsky's financial success and his being a man.

Indeed in Anna Hillkowitz's own letters there is little to suggest that she herself gave much conscious thought to her occupying a position more commonly associated with men. Among all the letters there is only one brief reference to the entire subject. At one point she makes the following observation in regard to gaining supporters for the JCRS: "I would go up to some men (and it is after all the men that count), and try to talk of the J.C.R.S." However, this statement is made matter-of-factly, with absolutely no elaboration, and it seems that rather than considering the situation from a critical point of view, she is simply giving what she considers a realistic appraisal of who controlled the finances in most families during the era.

From the correspondence it appears that Anna Hillkowitz's primary identification was with her fellow Jews and the JCRS. While it is impossible to determine the extent of Hillkowitz's religious observance from her letters, it is obvious that, like Spivak, she exhibited a deep commitment to her Jewish heritage and Yiddishkeit. References to Jewish holidays and customs are frequent in the correspondence, along with a liberal sprinkling of Yiddish terms. In one letter written to Spivak from Rochester, New York, in December of 1906, Hillkowitz mentions that she gave a speech for the JCRS cause in "shool" (synagogue) on Friday night after services and that, of course, she did not actually collect funds because of the Sabbath. In another letter Spivak wishes Hillkowitz a "Kosher Pesach" (Passover), and at a later date before Yom Kippur, "an easy fast." Whether Hillkowitz strictly followed Orthodox Jewish observances is unknown; however, the letters seem to indicate that she was very familiar with Jewish rituals and practices.

Like Spivak, Hillkowitz was a devotee of the Yiddish language. Un-
doubtedly it was her native language, and it is quite apparent that she did not regard it as either a demonstration of lack of culture or an unfortunate reminder of an outmoded tradition. In fact her fluency in Yiddish served her well in her duties as JCRS field secretary. In one of her very first letters to Spivak, Hillkowitz states: "I found my knowledge of the Yiddish language a great help to me as there were meetings that I addressed in Yiddish and also individuals who understood me better in that language than in English." No doubt the ability of any solicitor for the JCRS to speak Yiddish was a decided asset at the turn of the century. In addition to its practical value, Hillkowitz and Spivak as well probably viewed Yiddish as an almost symbolic bond which perpetuated Jewish cultural values among the Jewish people.

Although the facts are unclear, Anna Hillkowitz apparently resumed her position as a librarian at the Denver Public Library after 1907. Sometime later, probably in her early thirties, Hillkowitz married Dr. Abe Bresler, a dentist from New York, and gave birth to two children, Reva, who would also become a librarian, and Elya, named after Anna's father. Although she apparently did not continue her work for the JCRS in a formal manner, nevertheless her ties remained close. A letter from Spivak to Anna Hillkowitz Bresler written in 1924, some seventeen years after she left her job as field secretary, acknowledges a check for $200 presented by Anna to the JCRS on behalf of her brother Solomon Hillkowitz in California.

Anna Hillkowitz demonstrated that leadership skills were not found only among the German Jews. An independent, educated, and cultured woman with a strong identification with Judaism as well as with her fellow Eastern European immigrants, Anna Hillkowitz perhaps served as a role model for the generations of women that followed her. She had turned a voluntary task into a professional job and had also successfully synthesized her role as a Jew and an American. For Hillkowitz, her primary identification was with her Jewish heritage, yet she was quick to grasp the opportunities of American education and appreciative of the freedom her family enjoyed in America. Her American education allowed her to interact with both German Reform Jews and non-Jews on a cultural and professional plane, in her work as a librarian and in her involvement with Denver's Jewish women's organizations. Yet, in the end her closest ties were perhaps with the group she had referred to as unsere leit, the Eastern European Jews
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Notes

8. Ibid., pp. 5–6.
10. In 1954 the JCRS became a cancer research-center and hospital. Its name was changed from the JCRS to the American Medical Center and later the AMC Cancer Research Center and Hospital.
13. Information Sheet on the Hillkowitz family, on deposit at the Ira M. Beck Memorial Archives of Rocky Mountain Jewish History.
17. Hillkowitz Information Sheet.
18. In 1893 the family resided at 943 10th Street, and in 1900 at 2011 Clarkson Street, according to the *Denver City Directory* for those years.
22. Ibid., p. 4.
29. Hillkowitz to Spivak, St. Louis, April 4, 1906.
30. Ibid.
32. Hillkowitz to Spivak, Harrisburg, Pa., November 1, 1906.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
37. Anna Hillkowitz, “Travel Notes,” Sanatorium 1, no. 3 (May 1907): 51, (JCRS Archives, Box 170).
38. Hillkowitz to Spivak, April 29, 1906.
42. Spivak to Hillkowitz, May 14, 1906.
44. Spivak to Hillkowitz, January 13, 1906.
46. Hillkowitz to Spivak, undated.
48. Spivak to Hillkowitz, April 12, 1906.
49. Spivak to Hillkowitz, September 28, 1906.
51. Hillkowitz Information Sheet.
52. Spivak to Hillkowitz, July 28, 1924.
Amelia Greenwald (1886-1966)

(Courtesy of Mrs. Lucette Well, Iutica, Louisiana)
American Jewish Personalities

Amelia Greenwald: The Jewish Florence Nightingale

Leo E. Turitz

Hailed in the *Paris Times* of January 9, 1927 as “capable and efficient . . . ‘a born nurse,’ an organizer, and a leader of women,” Amelia Greenwald was, indeed, a remarkable woman who deserves her place in history along with Florence Nightingale and Clara Barton. In American Jewish history she belongs side by side with such prominent women as Rebecca Graetzi, Lillian Wald, and Henrietta Szold. Born in Gainesville, Alabama, in 1886, the daughter of Joseph Greenwald, a Confederate soldier, and Elisa (Haas) Greenwald, she became one of the outstanding women in the history of nursing.

Against her family’s wishes, she enrolled in 1908 in the school of nursing of the Touro Infirmary in New Orleans, Louisiana. After completing her course of studies, she did postgraduate work in psychiatric nursing at the Phipps Clinic at John Hopkins University in Baltimore. This was followed by more postgraduate work in public health nursing at Columbia University, New York City, where she had opportunity for service at the famous Henry Street Settlement. Later she was called upon by the Council of Jewish Women to organize and direct its rural activities in several states. The *Paris Times* reports also that she directed the New Jersey Public Health Association at Longbranch and organized the first hospital at Pensacola, Florida.

During World War I, she saw service with the American Expeditionary Force as chief nurse in several evacuation hospitals and, after the signing of the Armistice, she accompanied the First Army of Occupation to Germany to establish its first hospital in Coblenz.

Following the war, she was selected by a committee headed by Herbert Hoover and Dr. Lee K. Frankel to go to Warsaw, Poland, to establish, with the aid of the Joint Distribution Committee, Poland’s first school of nursing at the Jewish Hospital. The *Paris Times* records that the hospital was “noted for its famous doctors . . . but modern nursing
was lacking until Miss Greenwald organized the first class of student nurses there in 1923, after superintending the building of suitable quarters, laboratories, diet kitchens, and other features for the presentation of a complete and scientific nursing course.” During the three years that she was in Poland she graduated three classes of nurses.

The Palestine Post, December 18, 1932, tells of the awards earned by her achievements. The school itself “was decorated by the Division of Public Health of the League of Nations for its standards,” and Miss Greenwald “was publicly decorated by President Moscicki with the Golden Cross of Merit, being the first woman to receive that decoration.”

When she returned to the United States, she was active until the early 1930’s in public health work in the state of New York. Then she accepted the invitation of the Hadassah Medical Organization to come to Palestine to spend a year there and, in the words of the Palestine Post, “to take part in a comprehensive survey of the nursing service in its hospitals and of its training school for nurses.”

Upon her return from Palestine, her brother urged her not to retire from activity and convinced her to open a ladies’ ready-to-wear store in Eunice, Louisiana.

Amelia Greenwald never married. In 1939 she brought over from Germany a young girl, a distant cousin, Liselotte Levy, whom she adopted a few years later. Liselotte Levy Weil (her husband died recently) still conducts the business and lives in Miss Greenwald’s home, which she says is filled with treasures accumulated in the course of Miss Greenwald’s travels and rich and interesting life.

The eulogy in the Eunice newspaper recalled that “she was a member of one of the first American Legion Posts ever organized.”

Miss Greenwald died in 1966 at the age of eighty and lies interred alongside other members of her family in the Beth Israel cemetery in Meridian, Mississippi. Her gravestone bears the simple inscription: “Nurse, Army Nurse Corps, World War I.”

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Bernhard Marks: A Profile of One Man's Courage on the Western Frontier
Charles L. Rosenthal

On July 7, 1854, a letter appeared in the pages of the California Chronicle (a San Francisco paper) indirectly accusing the bankers of the state and the officers of the United States Mint in San Francisco of collusion “in their transaction of the public business.” The writer, apparently wishing to remain anonymous and yet to indicate his personal concern, signed the letter ANTI-MONOPOLY, and mailed it from Placerville, a California mining town on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. Formerly known as “Old Dry Diggings,” and later as “Hangtown,” Placerville had a long history of frontier violence. Here pioneer “Miner’s Justice” prevailed for many years, and the town had only been incorporated a few months earlier, on May 13, 1854.

The writer, pulling no punches, continued: “throughout the entire mining district a suspicion pervades the community that . . . the public business is controlled or influenced by the bankers for their mutual benefit and to the detriment of all others.” The paper’s editors, startled by these charges, buried the letter in the middle of the second page of the paper, and inserted a comment to assure their readers that the allegations were not true, but “we publish it . . . because a suspicion of neglect of duty seems to exist in the minds of some of the country people” (emphasis added).

One of those “country people” was indeed the author of the letter, a twenty-one-year-old Polish-born Jew, Bernhard Marks, who was raised in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Marks, like many other poor lads of his time, had a meager education. He had gone to work at eleven, and his formal education ended a year later. Lured by the excitement of new gold discoveries in the Far West, Marks left New Bedford at nineteen, and traveling by sailing ship to the Isthmus of Panama, crossed it by mule and by foot, and then sailed into San Francisco Bay in the spring of 1852. He found employment in a Jew-
Bernhard Marks (1832-1913)

(Courtesy of Frank H. Marks)
Bernhard Marks

ish-owned store in Placerville in January 1854.

His employers, Messrs. Kahn and Hyman, operated B. Hyman & Company, described by Marks as a sort of "Trading Post" that was stocked with "boots, clothing, drugs, hardware, liquors, gambling apparatus... in short a sample at least of most everything... except books."

Although separated from friends and family by some three thousand miles of largely unexplored wilderness, Marks appeared to be keenly aware of his Jewish heritage, and of the anti-Semitism which was widespread in this frontier town. Here the few Jews were traders, not laborers like the miners, who eked out a living with a pick and shovel. And yet in spite of the hostile environment and the isolation, he was prepared to attack those two lofty pillars of frontier society, the bankers of San Francisco and the officials of the United States Mint, through the power of his pen and with the unwitting assistance of the press.

I have drawn the material for this article from a collection of letters Marks wrote his younger first cousin, Jacob Solis-Cohen of Philadelphia. The letters were in the possession of my late father-in-law, J. Solis-Cohen, Jr., who published them in the *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* (vol. 44) in September 1954. My research also includes the acquisition of a photostat of Marks's letter published in the *California Chronicle* and the discovery of an earlier, unpublished letter written by Marks at the age of seventeen (New Bedford, Mass., September 14, 1850) to his cousin, Jacob Solis-Cohen, then only twelve years old. Frank B. Marks, Jr., the grandson of Bernhard Marks, has supplied some additional family history.

I first read the collection of Marks's letters some thirty years ago and was amazed by the clarity of his language and the real courage of his convictions. Would a twenty-one-year-old in today's world be so outraged, so courageous as to attack one of our sacred institutions, especially if he or she were a Jew living in a society in which anti-Semitism was rampant? Thirty years ago I was puzzled, but in recent months I have, at last, found the answer.

The key to understanding the courage of Bernhard Marks, and the dangerous consequences of his having written the letter (which included having to face possible violent death when it became known that he was the author), is found in a single sentence of a long letter he wrote
to Jacob Solis-Cohen in September 1850, from his home in New Bedford. Marks was interested in his cousin’s progress in school, whether or not he would have a Bar Mitzvah, and he wrote: “you will need no advice from me to improve your time while you can. . . . If I thought it was worth while I would send you some of my own books . . . which you would not only find deeply interesting and instructive, but would also give you a highly moral idea as regards your obligations to society” (emphasis added). There was the simple answer to my question. I concluded that anyone so committed at seventeen to becoming a responsible person in society would have no difficulty at twenty-one in being sufficiently outraged by the obvious bribery of the officials of the U.S. Mint by the bankers of San Francisco.

Why the bribery was obvious will be seen shortly as we read Marks’s letter of July 13, 1854, written to his cousin Jacob and family. In this letter Marks described in some detail gold operations in California, and said that he “wrote a communication to the Editors of The S. F. Chronicle, setting forth the facts, together with my own views on the subject . . . which I signed ‘Antimonopoly.’ In the next day’s issue, the charge of partiality was somewhat indignantly denied, and reasons, very specious ones, offered for the delay. (In the miners’ receipt of cash for their gold dust.) In the meantime the question ‘Who wrote that article?’ was being asked all over the town.”

Spelling out what he meant in greater detail, he wrote:

By propitiating the officers of the Mint, . . . the bankers received their returns every week . . . those whom they wished to sorry out of it, would be kept waiting, five or six weeks, so that in order to do a $10,000 business, it would require $60,000 or $70,000 in capital . . . and many, very many were crowded out of business.

As one can readily observe, this young man, knowing his cousin’s family were reading over his shoulder, did not use the language loosely. But Marks, with a flair for suspense, was preparing the Solis-Cohen family for the exciting consequences of this act of courage. He told them about “an incident [that] happened to me last week in relation [to the Chronicle letter] . . . which came very near being what is here called familiarly ‘A shooting scrape.’” But let Marks tell us exactly what happened.
On the afternoon of the 9th [of July], as a number of traders... were conversing on the subject in the Wells & Fargo Banking Office, the Banker's Agents were very bitter in their denunciation against "Antimonopoly" and one of them, a certain Noyes, who boasted of his having killed a Dutchman on the plains, declared that could he discover him, the author, he would whip him to death. Mr. Kahn, our senior (who was in the office), unguardedly and very injudiciously expressed a doubt as to his ability to do it. Whereupon they instantly concluded it to have been me as there is not another man in the concern, sufficiently familiar with the English language to do it [emphasis added]. Just at that instant I happened to pass the office... hearing my name called I stepped in. I was met at the door by Noyes, who demanded in a very insolent manner and in a very insulting tone, "W[h]ether or no I wrote that article?" At the same time, holding up the paper, I simply answered that it was none of his business. I may have prefixed an adjective to the noun. Letting fall the paper he made a spring at me, but was not half smart enough, for with one well directed blow I laid him across the teller's table. Before he could recover, my friends had led or rather carried me out.

Marks returned to his office, he said, and within a half-hour several men came into the office to advise him that Noyes "had armed himself with a bowie knife and intended to wait for me on the corner." They suggested that he not return to the store that evening, but Marks was not so easily intimidated.

I did not think it proper to take their advice, but transferring one of my revolvers from my desk to my breast, I crossed over as usual... On arriving at the corner at which I was told he was waiting, I... looked around, and there stood Noyes, seeing me he instantly came toward me, at the same time placing his hand upon the hilt of his knife. This justified me in drawing and cocking my pistol [Marks observed the code of the West]... but the rule is, that in acting exclusively on the defense, one may not fire so long as he has room to back. I therefore turned so as to bring my back to the house, and two steps more towards me, would justify me in shooting. But he was too crafty to do it. I ordered him to drop his knife or I would scatter his brains in every direction [emphasis added]. I was never so furiously excited in my life, yet never, so freezingly cool.

Reading the above for the first time, some thirty years ago, with my children enthralled at that moment by the Wild West program on our television set, I could not help but feel the irony of it all: the real truth about the Western frontier was far more exciting than any television production that tried to duplicate history with a three-dimensional stage set, background music—and in full color! Marks had opened my mind to the awful truth, the reality of living in a raw, frontier society,
and especially for a twenty-one-year-old Polish-born Jew.

Marks continued:

I was astonished at myself, in the meantime exclamations from all quarters were directed towards me, such as "fire away Marks"—"Shoot him"—"Don't let him draw a knife on you that way"—A very great crowd collected, for many had been waiting in expectation of something of the kind. It was very evident that nine-tenths of the crowd was favourable to me, all the traders because I had taken their part, and all the hoosiers because I was the smallest man (emphasis added).

How remarkable it was to rediscover this young man, so full of moral outrage, and with the physical courage to risk his very life for the wrongs committed against a group of men who very probably had no respect for a Jew, an outsider on the frontier—at least in their eyes.

Marks went on to report:

The crowd expecting that I would fire had cleared away from my antagonist so as to be out of danger of bad aim. Through this space the marshal and officers made their way, took our arms from us, and took us both into custody. We were soon discharged on bail and will be examined tomorrow morning.

But Jacob Solis-Cohen and his family, impatiently I am certain, had to wait for several weeks for the next letter to learn how justice was served in Placerville on the morning of July 10, 1854. Marks wrote:

... as far as I am concerned the trial was a mere farce, as I did not even undergo an examination, being discharged almost before I was aware my name had been called. The fine imposed on my antagonist was not as much by $100.00 as stated in the paper.

And so, to borrow the immortal words of Walter Cronkite, "that's the way it really was in Placerville, California, in the summer of 1854." The facts of the life of Bernhard Marks were far more exciting, more exhilarating, than the figment of any Western novelist's imagination. For here, in his own words, is a profile of one man's courage on the Western frontier. That he was born into the Jewish faith and appeared to live its tenets, can only add meaning to its retelling.

But there is another lesson in this as each of us thinks about our family, its history—our roots: Never destroy old letters and docu-
ments before you have determined their contents. For these letters demonstrate far better than most that if you wish to nurture your family tree, best leave those roots uncovered.

Charles L. Rosenthal is a retired businessman living in Binghamton, New York. He is extremely protective of his familial roots. Beyond his relationship through marriage to the Solis-Cohen family of Philadelphia, he counts among those roots the name of Louis Marshall, who was an uncle of Mr. Rosenthal’s mother, of blessed memory.

Notes

The American Jewish Archives is pleased to announce the publication of two new volumes:

*The American Rabbinate: A Century of Continuity and Change, 1883–1983* is edited by Jacob Rader Marcus and Abraham J. Peck. The volume discusses the evolution of the rabbinate in each of the major branches of American Judaism. The volume represents a pioneering effort in detailing the history of the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform rabbinate as they developed over the course of a turbulent century in American Jewish life.

Contributors to the volume include Jeffrey Gurock, Abraham J. Karp, David Polish, and Jonathan D. Sarna.

ISBN 0-88125-076-7

$20.00

*On the Edge of Greatness: A Portrait of American Jewry in the Early National Period* is authored by Ira Rosenwaike. The volume, a demographic study which provides quantitative material essential to an understanding of the place and nature of the American Jewish community in the early nineteenth century, fills a conspicuous void in our knowledge of this small but important American Jewish community which stood “on the edge of greatness.”


$25.00

Both volumes may be ordered from KTAV Publishing House, 900 Jefferson Street, Hoboken, N.J. 07030-7205.
In the early decades of American California following the gold rush, there was a hierarchy of ethnic standing. It was as pervasive as it was unjustified. Detailed reading of the early Western press indicates a ranking in which the top rung was occupied by those of American birth and Northern European ancestry. Equal to them were the English-speaking from the British Isles (except the Irish), and their cousins from the various British colonies. Closest to these were the French, who in many cases were style-setters and cultural leaders. Just below were those from the German states and principalities and the linguistically related peoples from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Further down were the Slavic immigrants, including the Poles, and at the bottom of the ladder were the racially distinct Asians, native Indians, blacks, and American Latinos. This unfair and prejudiced social ladder was paralleled in the rest of the country.

While the Jewish community as seen from the outside appeared to be highly united, social critics and the Jews themselves were well aware that they functioned with the same set of social priorities based on geographical origins. The main subethnic rivalry among Western Jews was between the Germans and the Poles. The Germans proclaimed their superiority and the Poles did not deny it. To be from Germany meant being a part of the best of Western European civilization, but being from Poland implied an origin stemming from an underdeveloped and relatively primitive country. Despite a number of prominent Poles in American history, their role was overshadowed by the Germans, who brought to these shores a sense of their superiority over their Eastern neighbors.

Every careful analysis of federal census data, registers of voters, Jewish organizational and synagogal records shows that for the West, Jews of Polish origin were numerically predominant over Germanic Jews. Polish Jews, whether from Russian-occupied or Prussian-occu-
pied Poland, resented what they regarded as German Jewish snobish-
ness. What is more they felt that the religious tradition (Minhag Polen)
as preserved by them was far more authentic than the Germanic ritual
(Minhag Ashkenaz). Curiously, American Sephardic and many French
Jews stayed aloof from these distinctions.

The words of Harriet Levy of San Francisco give a picture of the
caste and class divisions in Western American Jewish life.

That the Baiern [Germans] were superior to us, we knew. We took our position
as the denominator takes its stand under the horizontal line. On the social
counter the price tag “Polack” confessed second class. Why Poles lacked the
virtue of Bavarians I did not understand. . . . I accepted the convention that our
excellence was not that of the Baierns because we were Polish.  

In an effort to “pass” as a German rather than a Polish Jew, Harriet
Levy claimed German origin for her Polish-born parents when the
matter came up in public school. She was far from unique. All Polish
origins were considered second-class, but many could be disguised by
using the Germanic names for Polish towns.

However, one city could not be hidden behind a German veil. Its
name was inevitably associated with Poland, and those for whom it
was a known birthplace were readily identified as Poles. Warsaw was
that city. Therefore, Warsaw was virtually suppressed as a place of
origin for Jewish families that sought upward mobility and social es-
teem among their German coreligionists. Family memories have
glossed over Warsaw. Where biographical data were called for, that
city was ignored and alternative data were provided that implied ori-
gins other than Warsaw.

For example, when Morris Greenberg’s descendants supplied infor-
mation on him when the brass and bronze foundry established by him
in 1854 in San Francisco was one hundred years old, they simply gave
as his origin the true fact that he had been a foundry apprentice as a
youth in Paris. Unmentioned was the fact that he was born in Warsaw
in 1823.

In a similar vein the biographic material supplied by the descen-
dants of John Jones, the first Jew to serve as president of the Los
Angeles City Council (1870–1871), clearly implied that he was born
in England. An 1889 account reads that he was born in 1800 and “his
eyearly life was spent in London.” Another account, written in 1931,
specifically described him as "an Englishman, his early life was spent in London." As a matter of fact, it was recently discovered that on the monument over his grave, Warsaw is incised as his place of birth.

Even the descendants of Conrad Prag had no idea where he was born. Prag was the father of Florence Prag Kahn of San Francisco, who was the first Jewish woman to serve in the United States Congress. The information of his Warsaw birth in 1831 was apparently suppressed in transmission, but an obituary account in 1883 by a San Francisco correspondent printed in an Eastern Jewish publication established Warsaw as Conrad Prag's birthplace.

The distinguished San Francisco attorney and historian Kenneth C. Zwerin recalled an incident which occurred when his maternal great-grandfather, who had been born in Warsaw, died in the Bay City:

My mother told me that there was a feud as part of the family wanted to put in the death notice the fact that he was "a native of Warsaw," and the others wanted it to be "Germany." I was told that it was resolved by omitting any place [to indicate] where he was born.

While Warsaw was anathema, all throughout the West the names of obscure Polish towns are found on headstones, in biographical accounts, and in public records of Jews. Their obscurity protected them from revealing the Polish past. Places like Kempen, Thorn, Exin, Fihlene, Rogasen, Nakel, and Adelman, though Polish, might pass as German, but Warsaw—never!

Norton B. Stern is the editor of the Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly. William M. Kramer is the associate editor of the Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly.

Notes

2. Harriet Lane Levy, 920 O'Farrell Street (Garden City, N.Y., 1947), pp. 210-211.


Not So Strange Bedfellows: 
Felix Adler and Ahad Ha'am

Benny Kraut

In his review of my book From Reform Judaism to Ethical Culture: The Religious Evolution of Felix Adler (Reconstructionist, July–August 1980, pp. 23–24), Professor Mel Scult mused that "one has the feeling that if Adler had been exposed to Ahad Ha’am while he was in college, the way [Mordecai] Kaplan was, . . . his . . . intellectual development would have taken a completely different turn." Scult’s observation suggests that Ahad Ha’am might have provided Felix Adler, as he did Kaplan, with a cogent ideological rationale for affirming Jewish particularism that could have lived in “creative tension” with his passionate religious universalism. While intellectually tenable from a purely philosophical perspective, this intriguing observation clearly remains historical speculation; the social sciences have not yet progressed to the point of being able to anticipate exactly how a specific individual would react to a given set of social, cultural, and religious stimuli.

Nonetheless, Professor Scult’s connecting of Adler and Ahad Ha’am is of more than passing interest. I confess that during my research for the book, I too wondered what influences—personal and otherwise—might have helped keep Adler within the Jewish consensus, and I found myself frequently thinking about Ahad Ha’am. This was not surprising, since I was repeatedly struck not only by the obvious zealous ethical idealism of the two men, but also by the not infrequent parallels between their ethical convictions. (A comparison of the ethical thinking of Adler and Ahad Ha’am remains a fertile subject for study, and may reveal as much about the structural similarity of ethical idealism as specific insights on the thought of each man.) I searched for points of intellectual contact between the two men among the vast holdings of the Felix Adler Papers at Columbia University, but found almost none. To the best of my knowledge, Adler nowhere explicitly referred to Ahad Ha’am in his lectures, writings, or unpublished memoranda, although Ahad Ha’am’s brand of “spiritual
Zionism" seems to be what he attacked in a November 1915 lecture, "Zionism and Its Ideal." Adler may have read some of Ahad Ha'am's writings—he did read, for example, Simon Dubnow's History of the Jews in Russia and Poland, Moritz Lazarus's Ethics of Judaism, and Louis Ginzberg's Legends of the Jews—but if he read Ahad Ha'am's works, they appear to have made no significant impression. As for Ahad Ha'am taking cognizance of Adler, I did not pursue that avenue of research, and that turns out to have been a mistake.

Recently, Professor Michael A. Meyer of the Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion shared with me his discovery of a startling passage written by Ahad Ha'am in Hashiloah, in the regular section of "On the Questions of the Day," which indicates clearly that Ahad Ha'am not only knew of Adler, at least through secondary sources, but in fact thought very highly of him. In this passage, Ahad Ha'am, the founding father of "spiritual nationalism," does not rail against Felix Adler, the universalizing Jew who transcended Judaism and the Jewish nation, as one might have expected; on the contrary, he lauds him, and portrays him and his Ethical Culture Societies as examples worthy of emulation by the Jewish nation. This bears some comment.

To Ahad Ha'am, Felix Adler and his successful creation of the Ethical Culture Movement substantiated one of his own most fundamental spiritual beliefs: morality can and ought to be divorced from religion, and this can be accomplished without causing the demise of morality. The Ethical Societies, as Ahad Ha'am understood them, were established "to clarify moral questions on a logically clear and scientific basis and to strengthen the moral sentiment in the hearts of people both within and outside the Societies without relating in any fashion whatsoever to religion." Ahad Ha'am reported that Felix Adler, who more than twenty years earlier had founded the movement, feared that the pillars of religion in civilized countries were weakening and, lest all moral life, which heretofore had been totally identified with religion, be undermined as well, declared it vital for all people regardless of religious background to join together and structure independent ethical groups which would work out the requisite guidelines for contemporary ethical behavior. Not averse to manifesting some ethical pride or, perhaps more accurately, to illustrate his belief in Jewish moral genius, Ahad Ha'am took pains to remind his readers that the man
Felix Adler and Ahad Ha'am

responsible for this enormously positive and successful endeavor—Ethical Societies had already been founded in the United States, England, and Germany—was a Jew.

Ahad Ha'am shared Adler's fear of the potential decline of morality due to its ties to religion, for it dovetailed with his own assessment of the spiritual wants of the Jewish people. Contemporary Jewish national life was spiritually stultified, Ahad Ha'am argued, by the complete absorption of Jewish morality into Jewish religion. He asserted that there existed a Jewish national morality independent of religion, and that it must not remain subservient to religion; rather it should be developed as an independent field of inquiry on both a practical and a conceptual level to provide moral direction for the Jewish nation. Fully subscribing to his perceptions of the goals of Ethical Culture, Ahad Ha'am applied them to Jews and Judaism. He proposed that Jewish societies be established to discuss the compelling moral issues of the day for the specific purpose of determining what Jewish national morality demands of Jews. These societies would not only invite scholarly experts in various fields, but any Jew who sought to live as a Jewish nationalist could participate. What Adler achieved on a universal canvas, Ahad Ha'am hoped to actualize within the Jewish national community.

Paradoxically, Ahad Ha'am used the universalizing Ethical Culture Societies as a polemical foil against the two primary groups antagonistic to him. Against the traditionalists and the Orthodox, who avowed the inseparability of Jewish ethics and religion, Ahad Ha'am pointed to Adler and, by implication, to himself, to demonstrate that profoundly "ethical individuals are found not only among the separatists of Slobodka." Over against his fellow Jewish nationalists, with whose Zionist policies he vigorously disagreed, he threw down the gauntlet and challenged them—"be they Hovevei Zion, or [political] Zionists, or general Zionists"—to follow the general ethical goals and activities initiated by Ethical Culture Societies and "to investigate and explore the question of Jewish national morality in order to learn what their responsibilities are so that they may fulfill them." In this striking Hashiloah passage, therefore, one is confronted with an extraordinary historical irony: Ahad Ha'am held up Ethical Culture Societies as models for constructive Jewish living and for national moral, and hence, spiritual, regeneration.
How can one explain this remarkable phenomenon? To answer that polemics often make strange bedfellows is true, and to the extent that this passage is polemical, perhaps one has part or all of the answer. But might not one also speculate that Ahad Ha’am may well have considered Adler a kindred spirit, that the nationalist “agnostic rabbi” may have found in the universalist “atheistic rabbi” a man who shared with him an overarching spiritual quest for the ethical life, albeit not restricted within the confines of Jewish nationality or concerned with Jewish destiny?

Returning then to Professor Scult’s observation cited at the beginning, perhaps one could just as legitimately turn the question around: would Ahad Ha’am have been influenced by the universalism of Felix Adler had he been fully exposed to his thinking while a young student? In reality, I think neither man would have been much changed by an encounter with the other’s thought; their distinctive Jewish backgrounds and discrete cultural baggage would have militated against such a rapprochement. Certainly, however, one should not merely consider Felix Adler a potentially passive recipient of Ahad Ha’am’s nationalist orientation, for Adler had something to teach Ahad Ha’am. Ahad Ha’am acknowledged Adler’s ethical contributions and apparently felt an affinity for his work despite their respectively antithetical universalist and Jewish nationalist loyalties.

Benny Kraut is associate professor and director of the Judaic Studies Program at the University of Cincinnati.
Review Essay

From Political Expediency to Moral Neglect: The United States and the Religio-Ethnic Experience, 1933-1945
Andre Kuczewski


For a long time, social scientists have written about the “melting pot” concept in American history. If we are to believe this paradigm, the millions of immigrants who entered the United States during the great European exodus of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries underwent a unique (and seemingly unconscious) experience of cultural and social transformation. The many-faced and indelibly profound influences of the “Americanization” process (with all its particular customs, mannerisms, and way of life) reshaped the immigrant community from a heterogeneous grouping of assorted nationalities into a homogeneous “American type.” The immigrants discarded, or perhaps more accurately traded in, their “Old World” values and beliefs for a new set of social and political allegiances. Much like the proverbial Phoenix, the immigrants’ past was reduced to ashes in the crucible of the melting pot only to reemerge—resurrected, so to speak—in the form of noticeably changed individuals with a commonly shared American identity and purpose.

Is the melting pot concept a valuable tool for understanding the intricacies of United States history? Leo Kanawada, Jr., thinks not—at least not in the specific time frame on which he has decided to focus his
attention. The author finds that insofar as the subject matter of world politics from 1933 to 1939 is concerned, three distinct American religio-ethnic groups—far from making their opinions known with one unified voice as, the melting pot theory suggests—brought concerted and, not infrequently, unremitting political pressure on President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in an effort to promote their parochial points of view. During the period between FDR’s inauguration and Adolf Hitler’s invasion of Poland, Catholics, Italians, and Jews in American society exerted enough influence to significantly restructure or even completely alter the basic framework construction of the president’s foreign policy objectives.

Thus when Roosevelt expressed a determination to accord United States diplomatic recognition to the Soviet Union shortly after taking office in 1933, he found himself confronted by the powerful element of American Catholicism, which—with its traditional opposition to atheistic communism—reacted to FDR’s proposed goal with unequivocal anger and disapproval. Fear of losing the largest bloc in the Democratic party quickly convinced Roosevelt that it was absolutely imperative to soothe the ruffled feathers of the Catholic community without dropping the recognition plan altogether. “Throughout this period,” writes Kanawada, “Roosevelt was torn between his desire to consummate some association with the Russians and his need to maintain the support of the Catholic community.” The issue eventually took on such importance that Roosevelt gave it “top priority” (pp. 7, 13). In the end, FDR’s political tightrope-walking contest concluded happily for all concerned when he extracted a concession from the Russians to allow religious freedom for American nationals in the Soviet Union on business or diplomatic missions.

Avoiding a rift with American Catholics and constantly maintaining a harmonious relationship with them preoccupied FDR on two other occasions. When a wave of rabidly hysterical anticlericalism raced across Mexico during the early 1930’s, disturbed American Catholics galvanized their disenchantment into a ground swell of action. They urgently requested the president’s intervention to publicly denounce the Mexican government’s action and then recommended that he forward a strongly worded diplomatic message calling upon the administration of General Plutarco Elias Calles to immediately rescind its mindless harassment and patently discriminatory practices
against the Roman Church—actions which FDR sensitively wished to avoid at all costs, for fear that the move would be seen by Mexico as an inexcusable act of meddling in its internal affairs as well as a violation of his own “Good Neighbor” policy of nonintervention in Western Hemispheric affairs. The atmosphere, then, was charged with yet another politically explosive mixture, but once again FDR came up with an answer to an apparently insoluble problem—this time by initiating friendly sessions of patient diplomacy with the authorities in Mexico City (and their chief representative in the American capital, Ambassador Francisco Castille Najera), which succeeded in persuading Mexico to soft-pedal its attacks on the Roman Catholic Church.

The impressive show of political clout wielded by American Catholics also surfaced during the Spanish Civil War—which was interpreted by an overwhelmingly majority of Catholics as a black-and-white struggle between General Francisco Franco and the Soviet-sponsored communism of the Loyalist forces. The bloodletting on the Iberian peninsula also ushered in still another foreign policy crisis for President Roosevelt. FDR’s own personal (and closely guarded) sympathies for the Loyalists under siege clashed head-on with the view of the Catholic community at large and their erroneous understanding of that tragedy as a righteous religious crusade pitting Franco’s soldiers of light on one side and communism’s darkness on the other. Notwithstanding his own dearly held private convictions, Roosevelt cast them off to the wind and curried favor with American Catholics by adhering to a strict Spanish arms embargo, a policy-decision move which, much to FDR’s deepest chagrin, indirectly assured the ultimate victory of Franco’s troops, already well supplied with the most modern German and Italian implements of war.

Curiously enough, Roosevelt’s position vis-a-vis the Spanish Civil War did not bring howls of protest from Italian Americans who “donned their other hats as Catholics” (p. 75). But when the president condemned Benito Mussolini’s invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 as an act of military aggression, FDR drew vast amounts of political heat from Italian Americans—the largest group of foreign-born immigrants in the United States and a very fundamental pillar of the New Deal coalition. Although Roosevelt intended to impose an embargo on iron ore and oil leaving America for Italy, he was forced to back down completely as a result of the negative response it received among literally
millions of Americans of Italian descent—especially Generoso Pope, influential publisher of *Il Progresso Italo-Americano* and chairman of the Italian Division of the Democratic party’s National Committee. In Kanawada’s estimation, “Italian-Americans presented the Roosevelt administration with perhaps the best example of organized political pressure by an ethnic minority during his entire tenure in the White House” (p. 88).

Political expediency also appears to have been the overriding concern uppermost in FDR’s mind when he responded to the plight of Jews under attack by the Arabs in British-controlled Palestine—not to mention his reply to the ever rising crescendo of Hitler’s anti-Semitic tone.

After Jewish Americans transmitted their concern to the White House about the 1936 disturbances in Palestine, Roosevelt agreed to act on their behalf, with the prior understanding that any such initiative would be kept away from the public forum. Evidently FDR wanted to stay clear of any negative—and possibly damaging—repercussions arising from political opponents’ charges that he was hell-bent on promoting a “Jew Deal” for America. For all his determined efforts, however, the president had no legal avenue of forcing or, for that matter, persuading the British to open the doors of Jewish immigration to Palestine—although he personally favored such an option on more than one occasion when he conveyed his well-known feelings to senior British Foreign Office mandarins during roundtable diplomatic discussions.

On the subject of Hitler’s progressively escalating anti-Semitic assaults, Kanawada insists that “Roosevelt earnestly and sincerely struggled to rescue Jews from Nazi-dominated Europe before and during the war” (p. 93). FDR translated his concern into numerous positive actions, the best-known of which was his symbolic recall of American Ambassador Hugh Wilson from Berlin following the outrages perpetrated against Jewish lives and property during the infamous events surrounding *Kristallnacht*.

Invariably, Kanawada’s examination and assessment of Roosevelt’s policy regarding Germany’s answer to the “Jewish Problem” leads one into the vortex of the “Final Solution” itself. When looking back at the forty years of Holocaust scholarship which have elapsed since the Second World War, one is particularly struck—more than ever be-
fore—by the intensely cold-blooded horror of the Third Reich’s systematic murder of six million European Jews. However, for all the prolixity of this literature, it is still no exaggeration to say that—in many respects—the mass annihilation of so many innocent men, women, and children remains a sphinxlike mystery which has yet to reveal all its mute inner secrets. Indeed it is doubtful whether mankind will ever fully come to grips with the philosophical, political, social, and ethical forces that came together to produce Hitler’s criminally diabolical inferno.

To be sure, there were enough visibly dark clouds on the German horizon in 1933 to prompt some into accurately predicting the menacing developments of the future. For these individuals, Mein Kampf and the Nuremberg “Race Laws” proved sufficient omens of what was to later transpire as the greatest human catastrophe in the annals of recorded history. With retrospective hindsight, it appears almost unimaginable just how many countless others disregarded the handwriting on the wall until it was too late. To a very considerable degree, however, their misjudgment deserve sympathy, not scorn, for who in 1939 could have possibly believed that the German nation—crowned, as it were, with all the distinguished jewels of a glorious scientific and cultural past—was capable of producing a monstrous evil of such incomprehensibly towering magnitude?

What is not forgivable, however, is the reaction of the free world—especially the United States—when it received irrefutably concrete information surrounding the ominous facts of Nazi barbarism inside the death camps and throughout the occupied territories which were savagely administered under its military rule. For here—on the very same plane of tragedy which befell the Jews of Europe as a result of Hitler’s Final Solution of extermination—lies the bitter parallel misfortune and legacy of those who, although fully cognizant of the Jewish fate taking place inside Germany’s “New European Order,” preferred to adopt a passive attitude of watchful waiting while millions desperately cried out for help before they cruelly perished under a roof of hell the likes of which hopefully will never again rear its ugly head.

Why did the United States—a democratic country which, after all, prided itself as the political bastion and moral conscience of the free world—sit quietly as Hitler’s henchmen went to work carrying out the slaughterhouse liquidation of European Jewry? This is the profoundly
disturbing question which David S. Wyman and William E. Nawyn attempt to answer.

In the introductory preface to The Abandonment of the Jews, David Wyman informs us that his was a book both "difficult to research and to write" (p. ix). It is also a painful monograph to read—not for its treatment of the subject matter, which is presented in the best tradition of scholarly technique—but rather for its series of agonizing conclusions about America's response to the Holocaust that fills the reader with feelings of frustration, exasperation, sadness, and anger.

The author finds that American apathy toward the Holocaust reached epidemic proportions. This complacent attitude of neglect and indifference reached into every sector of United States society and transcended class, theological and educational lines: it infected Christians and Jews, religious representatives and the laity, intellectuals and workers, the humble and the mighty, the inarticulate and those belonging to what, for the lack of a better term, might best be described as the "best circles." With very few exceptions, American citizens cared neither about the plight of Jewish refugees before the outbreak of the war nor for the consequences of the hideous and indescribable injury inflicted on them as the conflict dragged on.

Before pointing an accusing finger at those who—in whatever capacity—could have helped the Jews of Europe to at least some extent but who instead preferred to remain silent on the issue, Wyman paints a frightening picture of American anti-Semitism as it existed during the 1930's. The author notes that anti-Semitism was "clearly linked" with the overall events that led to the abandonment of the Jews and "a significant determinant of America's ungenerous response" (p. 9). By the time Franklin Delano Roosevelt occupied the Oval Office, irrational ill-will toward Jews in the United States—in the form of vandalism of Jewish homes and stores or the desecration of synagogues and the vast dissemination of a brutal hate literature—reached "very high levels" (p. 9). Public opinion polls taken around this time revealed some truly startling conclusions. In one such probe of America's social pulse rate and heartbeat, sixty percent of those questioned expressed the view that Jews possessed objectionable character traits. The findings of other polls unearthed a plethora of equally distressing news, especially those which served notice that no less than one in every five Americans would support a political party advocating the expulsion
of all Jews from the United States. Still another sounding of "the man on the street" indicated that eighty-three percent did not favor lowering immigration barriers even on humanitarian grounds—a statistic made all the more shocking when one stops to consider the fact that a full twenty-five percent of all Jews questioned also shared the same opinion. It was this atmosphere—hot and humid with intolerance and insensitivity—which proved so conducive for the germination of seeds that would later sprout to yield the fruits of callous neglect.

The problem of anti-Semitism was not in itself, however, the determining factor which relegated the Jews of Europe to almost complete extinction. Had the American government sincerely strived to extend the hand of friendship, it would have certainly lessened the extent of the calamity. Regrettably, however, this human gesture of concern for one's fellowman never materialized, and the lion's share of the blame goes straight to Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose lack of direction and "indifference to so momentous an historical event as the systematic annihilation of European Jewry emerges as the worst failure of his presidency.... In the end, the era's most prominent symbol of humanitarianism turned away from one of history's most compelling moral challenges" (pp. xi, 313).

As head of state, FDR deserves nothing less than a full censure for his lack of action. Although the president knew about the Holocaust as early as November 1942, he remained pusillanimously silent for well over a year until he brought up the subject during a press conference. When he finally decided to act in some positively tangible way, political expediency—not genuine altruism—guided his every move. When Roosevelt signed an executive order that officially created the War Refugee Board in 1944, his motivation stemmed from a desire to deflect potential criticism in the event he was accused of doing nothing, and not—as many have long since wrongly believed—out of a passionate desire to aid Europe's Jews in some meaningful way. Ironically, FDR never personally used his good offices to publicly assist or encourage the WRB—which for the duration of its mandate limped along with chronic shortages of money and manpower. Almost miraculously, the War Refugee Board nevertheless managed to rescue 250,000 displaced persons, thanks largely to the generous assistance of volunteers and private donations.

However negligently Roosevelt handled these matters, it would be
unfair to single him out as the sole culprit in this sordid drama. Members of FDR’s cabinet and inner circle—including such prominent Jews as speech writer Samuel I. Rosenman and presidential adviser Benjamin V. Cohen—also appear to have never given much serious thought to the issue. Their preference to remain idle bystanders originated either from an unwillingness to embarrass Roosevelt or a wish to prevent a massive domestic anti-Semitic backlash if the discussion mushroomed into a major foreign policy debate. Only two men close to Roosevelt—Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes—spoke out about the plight of the Jews and regularly pressed the president to tackle the burning issue with unmistakable vigor and clarity of purpose. Despite Morgenthau’s and Ickes’ courageous stand—for which history must always remember and commend them—it remains a deplorable fact that, on the highest echelons of the governing process, theirs was a lonely (and unheard) voice in the wilderness.

The response to the Holocaust from America’s legislative body was also infinitely less than adequate and ranged all the way from cautious concern to outright hostility. Some liberal-minded congressmen, while expressing genuine sympathy, failed to stoke the fires of discussion with sufficient arguments that would have been required to keep the debate alive. Southern Democrats and conservative Republicans, on the other hand, wanted no part of any plan that would increase the flow of additional Jewish refugees to the United States. Incredibly, even the most powerful Jewish American in Congress—House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Sol Bloom—expressed no sustained interest in what was happening overseas.

Specific organs of the American government—principally the State and War Departments—placed roadblocks in the path of every conceivable opening that could have lessened or relieved the terrible burden of Hitler’s war against the Jews. Staffed by old-stock Protestants with nativist and anti-Semitic inclinations, the State Department—especially Secretary Cordell Hull and Assistant Secretary Breckinridge Long—exemplified a “consistently negative approach to rescue” (p. 189). In the three and one-half years the United States was at war with the fascist powers, the State Department permitted the entry of 21,000 refugees—a mere ten percent of the total number which could have been allowed even under the country’s tightly restrictive quota system.
For its part, the War Department was also guilty of dishonorable conduct. In fact, it proved just as uncooperative as the Department of State—perhaps even more so. For example, the War Department politely turned down numerous pleas from refugee agencies to use its transport ships on emergency rescue evacuation missions of Jewish civilians. The most common form of excuse invoked by War Department officials to explain their actions almost always referred to the fact that these ocean bound carriers were sorely needed for military purposes and hence unavailable for other functions. That argument, had it been true, would have basically justified the War Department's difficult but essentially acceptable decision. But in reality, as Wyman angrily contends, it was a despicably fraudulent hoax with which the War Department shamelessly washed its hands over and over again to conveniently sweep the entire issue under the carpet. Curiously, there was absolutely no difficulty locating ships when it came to ferrying non-Jewish refugees—vessels mysteriously popped up in great numbers to relocate thousands of displaced persons from their wartorn lands to safe havens in the Middle East, Africa, and other regions untouched by the armed conflict. “When it was a matter of transporting Jews,” contends the author, “ships could almost never be found. This was not because shipping was unavailable but because the Allies were unwilling to take the Jews in” (pp. 335–336).

Outside the corridors of power, apathy was rampant among both Christians and Jews. The hierarchies of the Protestant and Roman Catholic faiths were generally unmoved by the sheer magnitude of the Jewish tragedy. Newspaper and magazine coverage was at best slim. With the notable exceptions of the Nation and the New Republic, the mass-circulation print media failed abysmally to forward the news of Hitler’s gas chambers on a continually regular basis. Few prominent Americans made their concern known to a wide public audience; among those who did were Fiorello La Guardia, Thomas Dewey, Wendell Willkie, Herbert Hoover, Alfred Smith, and last but not least, William Randolph Hearst, who—despite his notorious reputation as a sensational muckraker—reminded his readers in many editorials that the Holocaust was, first and foremost, a tragedy that touched the souls of all conscientious citizens. Labor leaders William Green and Philip Murray, of the AFL and CIO respectively, went on record as well, although neither made a concerted effort to carry his inner convic-
tions to the grass-roots rank and file.

Spokesmen for the American Jewish community who enthusiastically took up the cause of Europe's suffering Jews were also remarkably few and far between. The fight to awaken the United States' Jews to what was happening to their brethren was led by two giants: Abba Hillel Silver and Stephen S. Wise. But, for the most part, as Wyman laments, "Jewish intellectuals remained as uninvolved as non-Jews" (p. 320). Respected and outstanding members of American Jewry—Felix Frankfurter, Bernard Baruch, and Walter Lippmann, to cite only a few representative examples—were either lukewarm, noncommittal, or completely uninterested. Taken together, the revelations exposed in *The Abandonment of the Jews* present a very sad picture indeed and it is not in the least bit surprising that the author concludes early into his book that "the tradition of America as a shelter for the oppressed dissolved" during this crucial era (p. 137).

If there was ever a single prestigious and influential group in the United States which had almost boundless potential to help European Jews in some way or another, it was the American Protestant Church, which, with a membership of forty million in 1933, represented one-third of the total national population. Pathetically, religious and lay Protestants also shrugged off their Good Samaritan responsibility, as William E. Nawyn convincingly demonstrates in his stunning—and numbing—book.

The author begins his study with an introduction and a chapter entitled "The American Setting." Here he examines the rise of the fascist element in Germany, the origins of Hitler's perverse racial doctrines, the misguided restrictions of American immigration policies, and the widespread circulation of anti-Semitism in the United States before World War II. Unlike Kanawada, who wrongly interprets Roosevelt's reaction to the Holocaust through rose-colored glasses, Nawyn finds himself in full agreement with Wyman and shows that from 193 to 1941 neither FDR nor most of his government ever took the time to publicly condemn the Nazi actions against the Jews. In fact, one could almost say that the exact opposite was the case when on several occasions Cordell Hull or other State Department representatives actually apologized to the German Foreign Office for the behavior and language of American citizens who openly criticized the Nazis' persecution of the Jews. The remaining nine chapters of the book delve
into “the general indifference that characterized the American Protestant attitude toward the plight of the Jews, and the difficulties experienced in raising substantial funds with which to extend assistance to the refugee victims of Nazi oppression” (p. 7).

Nawyn accomplishes this task by carefully looking at six major Protestant denominations: the Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Mennonites, and the Society of Friends, or, as they are more familiarly known, the Quakers. The author peers into the official responses of these religious affiliations to Hitler’s attack on the Jews—together with an analysis of the positions adopted by the ecclesiastical press and “individual voices” within the Protestant clergy and laity.

Nawyn finds that the attitude of most Protestants toward the Jews “was somewhat ambivalent” (p. 35). For example, the governing bodies of the Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Mennonite churches neither commented on the anti-Jewish policies inside Germany nor at any time advocated assistance to Jewish refugees. A few voices within the Presbyterian and Lutheran communities, however, expressed complete disapproval of the Third Reich’s tactics—albeit to a very limited extent, since they failed to air their views publicly.

The General Convention of the Methodist Church, on the other hand, took note of the Holocaust on only one occasion. “Indeed, it seems that, for the most part, American Protestants entertained attitudes toward Jews little different from those of Americans generally. Thus it appears that a latent anti-Semitism existed among the members in the pew that had to be taken into consideration by Protestant leaders when advocating and proposing ‘pro-Jewish’ actions” (p. 184). A notable exception to this rule were the Quakers, who, on an individual basis and as a whole, receive praise from the author for their “positive” reaction to the Jewish tragedy (p. 185). “In general, the Quaker response to the Nazi Jewish policies can be characterized as one of few words and many deeds, thus standing in rather sharp contrast to the much rhetoric and little action marking the reaction of the Protestant mainline denominations” (p. 135).

The record of the Protestant religious press appears just as uneven and inconsistent as the resolutions passed by their governing administrative councils. Although most commented on such epic events as the St. Louis fiasco and the Kristallnacht debacle, “about half” refrained from taking a stand on the overall meaning of the Holocaust or the
American government's deliberate foot dragging on the issue (p. 54). “Taken as a whole, the mainline denominational organs did demonstrate an awareness of and concern for the Nazi oppression of the Jews and the refugee crisis that it precipitated, although the degree varied greatly from one journal to another. But insofar as frequency of comment is a valid indicator, it would seem that these issues were not, in general, of continuing and paramount concern” (p. 60).

The views of private individuals within the Protestant Church also differed dramatically and fluctuated from one extremity of the spectrum to the other. Diversity of opinion ranged all the way from the fierce and categorical denunciations of the Nazis by New York Riverside Baptist Church pastor Harry Emerson Fosdick and Methodist Episcopal Bishop Francis J. McConnell to the enunciations of Methodist Bishops Otto F. Melle and John L. Nuelsen—who criticized those voicing disapproval of Hitler’s anti-Semitic campaign—and Southern Baptist Convention President M. E. Dodd, who fell into the moral gutter by defending Germany’s racial policies as a just reaction to what he saw as the Jewish inclination toward communism, economic domination, and other social evils. Many more followed in Dodd’s footsteps by pushing his twisted bigotry one degree higher, insisting that the Nazi persecution was basically salutary, since it would inevitably drive Jews into the fold of the Christian community. Other Protestants with a similar frame of mind—while obviously not prepared to adopt such an absurd argument (at least not in the open)—nevertheless adamantly maintained that Jews were partly to blame for their own woes because they had failed to assimilate sufficiently into the mainstream of Germany’s cultural and political life.

Essentially, the “general apathy” of American Protestants was “widespread” (p. 195). The mass indifference, Nawyn is quick to point out, however, “should not detract from an appreciation of the small core of deeply concerned individuals and organizations. . . . It would be incorrect to say that the Protestant churches were silent with respect to racial persecution in Germany or that they did nothing in the face of the refugee crisis. But viewed in the context of Protestantism’s vast numbers, wealth, and potential influence, its response was meager. Yet it was not inconsequential” (p. 195).

As a final note of summary, then, it seems obvious that these books completely shatter many dearly held notions about the contours of the
American experience. It will therefore now be impossible to avoid the necessary task of looking at a good number of their significant conclusions, which strike at the very heart of the United States’ social and political history.

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Introducing Edward King's 1894 novel *Joseph Zalmonah* in the April 1985 issue of *American Jewish Archives* (p. 11), I spoke of King as "a teacher at the celebrated Educational Alliance in the Lower East Side." In doing so, I overlooked Milton Hindus' essay "Edward Smith King and The Old East Side" (in vol. 64-1974/75 of *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, pp. 321–30) distinguishing the American-born novelist Edward King (1848–1896), the author of *Joseph Zalmonah*, from the Scottish-born Edward King (1846–1922), who championed Henry George, was a key figure in the Central Labor Union, and subsequently lectured at the Educational Alliance. Prof. Hindus notes: "The confusion of the two Kings is in part due to the obscurity into which both have fallen, and it is also due to the closeness of their ages and the fact that their interest in the Jewry of the Old East Side overlapped for a brief period" (p. 321).

Non-Zionism in America was a central and genuine phenomenon, and one wonders how it is that this reality (monographs about personalities and individual organizations notwithstanding) has not been directly and intensively researched. Dr. Kaufman’s scholarly work is a significant contribution toward overcoming this gap.

Non-Zionism was located somewhere between the anti-Zionism of an organization like the American Council for Judaism and the conspicuous Zionism of, for example, the Zionist Organization of America. Non-Zionists favored the development of Palestine as a (not “the”) shelter for refugees from oppressive countries and a (again, not “the”) source for religious and spiritual inspiration. They were inclined to side with the economic and cultural development of Jewish Palestine, but at the same time to negate the aspiration for Jewish political sovereignty.

Menahem Kaufman skillfully depicts the concrete positions taken by the major non-Zionist organizations regarding Palestine and Zionism during the fateful decade 1939–1948. This description is the heart of his book.

At the beginning of the period discussed, the non-Zionist organizations obviously rejected the endeavor for a Jewish state, but at the end of the decade most of them had, each in its own way, moved toward an attitude of support for the establishment of the State of Israel. And since May 15, 1948, Dr. Kaufman suggests, non-Zionism in America has been transformed into a “pro-Israel” kind of ideology.

What were the factors that brought non-Zionists closer to the idea of Jewish sovereignty during 1939–1948? The author argues that it was not aggressive European anti-Semitism nor anti-Semitism in the United States that caused the change. Rather, the main reason in-
fluencing the non-Zionists was the Holocaust. After the war, Palestine proved to be the only place in the world ready to absorb Jewish refugees; in addition, an independent Jewish entity would compensate the terrible trauma of the Jewish people.

It seems to me that the book does not take into account sufficiently the influence of the pre-Israel Jewish community in Palestine on the course of American Jewry. The Yishuv, despite all odds, did develop as an all-embracing viable entity. It built up an economy that embraced agriculture and industry; it resourcefully trained defense forces; and it creatively cultivated a wholesome new Jewish civilization. The "organic" development of the Yishuv, the new Palestinian-Jewish character illustrated by the sabra image—all this aroused feelings of identification with the Zionist endeavor in the Land of Israel. It is true that the Yishuv was in some respects quite vulnerable, and constantly appealed to the Western diaspora for assistance. Still, Jewish Palestine was considered a success and probably played an important role in the change of American Jewish public opinion toward accepting Zionism.

It seems that the nature of the society of the Yishuv was also a factor working to attract positive feelings. The community was democratic, pursuing equality, social responsibility, and human dignity. The so-called natural monopolies (land, water, public utilities, etc.) were owned or controlled by the public, and a formidable sector of the economy was cooperative. Within the cooperative sector were the kibbutzim, which aroused great interest and admiration. The Yishuv had the image of a pioneering society heroically striving against all kinds of hardships. This all helped to make Jewish Palestine popular in the American and American-Jewish mind. To be sure, some features of the Palestine Jewish community aroused the criticism of American Jews, and even caused some conflict between them and the settlers in Palestine. Still, on the whole, it is highly suggestive that the Zionist enterprise in Palestine was favorably looked upon.

Undoubtedly, the progressive aspect of the Yishuv was a meaningful factor that led large parts of the non-Zionist camp to support Zionism. It seems that this was the case with, for example, the Jewish Labor Committee and the Reform movement. Even the American Jewish Committee, which was concerned with the problems of separation of church and state, and the status of the Arabs, was probably attracted by the free and creative life of Jewish Palestine.
The American Zionist leaders, the Zionist newspapers, all often emphasized the nature of the *Yishuv* as being akin to the best in American tradition. This vigorous presentation, I suggest, also should be taken into consideration when the topic of American non-Zionism and Palestine is examined.

Of course, each non-Zionist organization had its own structure and its individual state of mind. The specifics of each of those are revealingly described in *Non-Zionists in America*. Thus the reader is sensitively informed about the American Jewish Committee's peculiar tradition of shaping attitudes to comply to the official American line. Even just a few days before the declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel, "the Committee itself avoided demanding the recognition of Israel and thus remained loyal to its policy existent since the years 1944 to 1946: Initiating political steps on the Palestinian question only after pre-confirmation by the State Department. This was the Committee's line, even when Jewish public opinion was clear cut." It was only after Truman had recognized Israel that the American Jewish Committee "felt free to follow suit" and request him to adopt pro-Israeli policies (pp. 264–165). Still, before April 1948, the committee did press time and again for the pursuance of the Partition Resolution and assisting the *Yishuv*; and immediately after May 15, the AJC's president, Joseph Proskauer, lobbied persistently for massive American support for Israel. The elitist committee thus eventually did reflect the historical shift of American non-Zionism toward complying with the idea of a Jewish state.

In contrast to the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Labor Committee was not much bothered during the period discussed by the dual-loyalty dilemma, and developed a rather independent political course. This was expressed, for example, in its public concern about the growing anti-Semitism in Europe and the United States, and its firm demand to allow Jewish immigration to the States over and above the quota. In the years 1947 and 1948, the Labor Committee supported the Partition Plan while ignoring the twists of American foreign policy.

From the time of Henry Monsky's presidency of B'nai B'rith (1938), the historical neutrality of the order had been colored by a sympathetic attitude to the Zionist cause. In 1940 Monsky declared, in the name of one hundred thousand members, an unqualified support for the
Zionist economic organization, the United Palestine Appeal. Later he initiated the American Jewish Conference in the summer of 1943 that eventually called for the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish commonwealth. In 1947 and 1948, his successor, Frank Goldman, led B'nai B'rith to support the Partition Plan in a massive democratic way.

In 1935, the Reform organizations—Union of American Hebrew Congregations and Central Conference of American Rabbis—declared neutrality regarding Zionism. For several reasons, however, one of which was the increasing number of Zionist Reform rabbis, the scale began to tip toward support of Zionism; but the split in the Reform movement in 1943 (the founding of the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism) hindered this course. During the crucial months of the creation of the State of Israel, the Reform movement, which in 1947 had evaded the Partition debate, again kept silent. Yet it is important to note that Abba Hillel Silver, president of the CCAR from 1945 to 1947, was a great Zionist leader. Moreover, the majority of the UAHC executive in the spring of 1948 was for the establishment of a Jewish state in part of Palestine. These facts indicated that the Reform movement was gradually affected by the undercurrents that consistently moved the bulk of American Jewry toward recognition of the Zionist solution.

Despite the fact that the leaders of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee came from the same milieu as those of the American Jewish Committee, they cultivated social and economic activities, bearing political implications, that amounted to a distinctive line of their own. This course, closer to Zionism than the one held by the committee, expressed itself in cooperation with the United Palestine Appeal within the framework of the United Jewish Appeal. The historic extraordinary conference of the UJA in December 1945 was the first manifestation of the emerging American Jewish support for the new Palestine as the solution for Jewish refugees (pp. 145–148). In similar vein, the proud testimony before the Anglo-American Committee in 1946 of Joseph Schwartz marked the actual help of the overseas relief organization for the Zionist cause during the crucial five years or so that preceded the establishment of the State of Israel (pp. 152–153).

Dr. Kaufman rightly suggests that non-Zionism is a unique American phenomenon. In Europe, the Jewish community used to be ideologically split between Zionism and anti-Zionism; by contrast, in the
United States non-Zionism was a major trend. But this observation, raised in the introduction, is not developed in the book. The book also lacks a conclusion. The result is that the above-mentioned, as well as other interesting insights spotted in the book have not been employed productively. Some parts of the book describe at length events that would have better been summarized as background for the main theme. Here is where perhaps the editor of the volume should take note.

This historical work might benefit from utilizing the Ben-Gurion Archives at the Sede Boqer Campus. Otherwise, Non-Zionists in America is an excellently documented book sustained by a vast array of primary sources, as well as by pertinent scholarly writings. The book has fifteen appendices that are both important and relevant.

A reedited English version of the book would significantly enrich the English-speaking Jewish world of learning.

—Allon Gal

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In his famous letter from the Birmingham Jail, which was addressed to the white clergy of Birmingham (Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish), Martin Luther King, Jr., made a searing indictment of the silence of the white churches and synagogues, especially in Birmingham but by implication throughout the South and even throughout the country, in the face of racial injustice. A prominent Atlanta Reform rabbi was one of the clergymen to whom the King message was addressed. Whether for good or for ill, that King letter of moral accusation will guarantee the rabbi's place in history.

But that incident—which is included in this brave-hearted and tender tribute to the life of the author's late husband, Rabbi Jack Rothschild—raises a broader question. Where was the southern Jewish community during the gut-wrenching days of torment when the civil rights movement was treated by pandering politicians and a terrified public as an alien plague to be combatted with all powers at their command? With few exceptions, Jewish laymen ran for cover. For many it was an act of negative heroism to resist pressures to join the White Citizens Councils which proliferated in most parts of the South. A few lay persons—Morris Abram, then a young attorney in Atlanta, was foremost among them—spoke out vigorously and made no effort to conceal their Jewish identity. Most froze into invisibility; some put exceptional pressure on their national organizations to temper their public statements in support of the Supreme Court desegregation decision. This reviewer was once excoriated by a committee of leading Jews in Montgomery, Alabama, who asserted that "you are like Hitler" because the UAHC statements "subject us to anti-Semitism." That was extreme paranoia, but it conjures up the climate of pervasive anxiety which filled every deep southern community and with which every rabbi in the region had to reckon.

So how did the rabbis do? Were they part of the problem or part of the solution? One answer, of course, is both. A better answer is that
while Reform rabbis, as the historical communal and interfaith leaders, did better than more traditional rabbis, the overall picture was a mixed bag.

There was one pro-McCarthy renegade rabbi in Mississippi who actually collaborated with the worst of the racists, arguing that Judaism and segregation were quite compatible. Even the racial extremists did not take him seriously as a rabbi. On the other hand, there were a handful of rabbis who spoke out clearly against segregation, worked diligently in human rights councils and ministerial associations, and even encouraged the UAHC and CCAR to speak out nationally, both because it was right and also because it strengthened their hands in their congregation and community. The late Charles Mantinband, then in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, was the most poignant example of this group. He did not seek publicity; he was not a lion, emitting roars of prophetic rhetoric from the pulpit. He spoke rarely on racial issues, and when he did, quietly and in a conciliatory tone, he never permitted any doubt as to where he or Judaism stood. In his private life, he socialized with blacks and whites equally and absolutely refused to permit the barbarities of local practice to shape the Mantinband lifestyle (his devoted wife, Anna, shared his passion for equality).

But most rabbis in the Deep South sat the antisegregation war out. One—in a heartbroken confession—told me he couldn’t bear to look at himself in the mirror in the morning because he knew he had betrayed his deepest values. “But I’m too old, too weak, and my people are too threatened.” He knew what was right, but could not muster the strength to fight for it. Another Reform rabbi had no such guilt feeling. “I wouldn’t risk one hair on the head of one of my members for all your schwartzes put together.” That nauseating racism was not typical of deep southern rabbis either, but it was not so aberrational as to cause any moral uproar in that large congregation or community. That congregation was infinitely more exercised by the appearance of northern rabbis who came—like Roland Gittelsohn—to speak about the Jewish imperative of civil rights at a UAHC convention, or—even worse—at the arrival of northern rabbis (like Si Dresner of New Jersey) prepared to join in King demonstrations and go to jail as a consequence.

Among the rabbis of the South in that challenging period, one of the most effective, articulate, and prophetic spirits was Rabbi Jack Roths-
child, who was the spiritual leader of the Hebrew Benevolent Congregation from 1946 until his death in 1973. This book, clearly a labor of love, is a most fitting tribute to a very special rabbinic career. Rothschild was one of a handful of Atlanta figures—Martin Luther King, Jr., Martin Luther King, Sr., Mayor Ivan Allen, Morris Abram, Mayor William Hartsfield, Ralph McGill—who were among the others who were the architects of a new and decent Atlanta which, in the end, led the way to change and racial justice.

I was privileged to know Jack Rothschild well. He served for years (as did Mantinband) on the national Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism. When the temple was bombed, I was among the first to be called by Jack. It was my honor to speak from the pulpit many times. But this candid and sprightly volume of recollections gave me a deeper understanding of what moved him, the pattern of his ministry, and the special fabric of communal life—general and Jewish—which characterized Atlanta.

To Rothschild, the racial challenge was the supreme moral litmus paper test for America, for Atlanta, for Christianity, and for Judaism. It is clear from this book that he faced plenty of resistance—both petty and formidable—within the congregation and the community. Death threats and middle-of-the-night telephone warnings were frequent. After the bombing, the FBI and local police guarded the Rothschild home, and tension was so acute that the Rothschilds worried about psychological damage to their children. Not all members appreciated the Rothschild sermons or the family life-style. Old southern belle Jewish ladies called Janice to express amazement that the Rothschilds were seen at a restaurant with “nigras” and demanded to know how the “good Christians” would perceive such a happening. Didn’t the Rothschilds remember Leo Frank (an Atlanta Jew lynched in 1915)? Janice retorted that if it bothered them, they couldn’t be “good Christians” and slammed down the phone. Mostly, their shared good humor sustained them, and their obviously superb partnership carried them through trials which could have undermined a lesser marriage.

Rothschild’s civil rights career was one of total commitment blended with prudence and an uncanny sensitivity to the parameters of just how far he could go without losing his people. He spoke clearly on every racial issue, especially those swirling in Atlanta, but he never joined a demonstration (except once, for Soviet Jewry). He did not
participate in the March on Washington; he did not join with his rabbinic colleagues who went to jail with King in testing public accommodations. He saw his role as the spiritual leader and moral guide of his congregation and community, and he fulfilled that role superbly. I never heard him criticize those of us—rabbis and laymen—who played other roles; indeed, he defended the marches, the sit-ins, and the demonstrations, but they were not his things. His balance was exquisite, and it made him the effective force he was. He was not a publicity hound. When the press called him, he said what he thought with dignity and clarity. His widow notes that the press never called him for anything but controversy. He sensed the power of the media, but also their mindless and mischievous bent. Rarely did he refuse requests from colleagues to come and speak from their pulpits—and he said the same things there as he said in Atlanta, permitting himself only gentle reminders of northern hypocrisy on racial matters.

Rothschild had the support of lay leaders with courage and guts of their own. One of his presidents at a climactic period was Robert Lipshutz, who was later to serve as chief counsel to the White House in the presidency of Jimmy Carter.

Rothschild was a classical Reform rabbi who became an ardent lover of Israel, but one who never completely reconciled himself to Sephardit in the temple or to the rush toward tradition. He drew strength from the national Reform movement, serving Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations handsomely throughout his career. He fought hard for the establishment of the UAHC Religious Action Center in 1962. In his vital and personal relations with the Christian clergy, black leadership, and the civic community, he maximized his influence for good. He was prophetic without taking himself too seriously. When Atlanta honored him, there was standing room only in the vast hotel ballroom. As Janice reports, he was staggered, embarrassed, and deeply moved by this testimonial.

Jack Rothschild touched, changed, and shaped his community and his congregants. Nothing pleased him more than the evidence that his Jewish passion for social justice and communal service had inspired young people in the congregation and affected their lives in significant ways.
Janice was not just a loving Boswell. She was a strong co-partner in these fights for decency. Now married to David Blumberg, a distinguished Jewish leader, she has written a book that is more than a loving tribute to her first husband. A writer and historian, she has given us an important commentary on one special rabbi's odyssey in a troubled and tempestuous era.

It was my good fortune to be invited to deliver one of the annual Jacob Rothschild Memorial Lectures at the temple in Atlanta. Janice and David Blumberg were in the congregation for the occasion. How fitting that on that weekend the incumbent rabbi, Alvin Sugarman, cut from the same cloth, announced with tears of pride that the temple had decided to establish a shelter for homeless persons in Atlanta, and that one hundred volunteers were already in place to minister to the dispossessed who would be sheltered and fed at the expense of the congregation.

My own words of tribute were inconsequential compared to this living expression of the continuing legacy of a gentle rabbi whose life made a powerful difference in making “justice flow like a mighty stream” in the heart of a great American city.

—Albert Vorspan

Albert Vorspan is vice-president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and director of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism. He is the author of, among other works, Great Jewish Debates and Dilemmas.

Alice Wexler's *An Intimate Life* is an insightful contribution to the growing body of literature focused on demystifying the life of Emma Goldman. Similar in format to Richard Drinnon's classic *Rebel in Paradise*, Wexler adds a psychohistorical approach to the analysis of the contradictions which make up Goldman's life. She has gathered a wealth of evidence from local presses, small anarchist publications, and personal letters (including the recently discovered correspondence with lover Ben Reitman) which allows her to discuss in great detail Goldman's love-hate relationship with her family, her lovers, America, and the use of violence by anarchists.

Perhaps the most innovative and intriguing aspect of Wexler's study is her use of current feminist dialogue on "mothering" to understand Goldman's political energy. In Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born*, Wexler finds what seems to be a perfect description of Goldman:

> The woman who has felt "unmothered" may seek mothers all her life—may even seek them in men. . . . But the "motherless" woman may also react by denying her own vulnerability, denying that she has felt any loss or absence of mothering. She may spend her life proving her strength in the "mothering" of others. . . . In a sense she is giving to others what she herself has lacked; but this will always mean that she needs the neediness of others in order to go on feeling her own strength. She may feel uneasy with equals—particularly women. (p. 286, n. 48)

Wexler finds that Goldman did, indeed, feel neglected by her own mother, did feel uneasy with women (to the point of being homophobic), and did play the role of mother for her lovers, her sister prisoners, and much of the American anarchist movement. Wexler also suggests that Goldman inherited her love for oratory from her mother, Taube, reputedly an excellent storyteller. Taube was also an activist, helping Jewish boys to avoid the czar's cruel draft and, once in America, participating in Jewish social reform organizations. Wexler concludes that "as she grew older, Emma came to admire Taube's activism, and it seems likely that in her own dedication to public life on a national and
international level, she was both emulating and outdoing her mother” (pp. 9-10). Those who already accept the psychological explanation of the ties between childhood experience and actions in later life will likely be convinced by Wexler’s speculations. Those who are skeptical of the psychohistorical approach will not find anything new here likely to sway them. In fact, even Wexler is tentative about many of her psychological conclusions, tempering them with phrases like “it seems likely” and “apparently.”

Wexler does not limit her analysis of Goldman to the relationship between mother and daughter. Like Drinnon, she begins her book by describing the oppression of Jews in Russia and the specific burdens faced by the Goldman family. Both Drinnon and Wexler recognize that, though Goldman herself failed to appreciate the influence of being Jewish on her thought, it is important to question what such an influence might be.

Both describe Goldman as Isaac Deutscher’s “non-Jewish Jew,” though they do not credit Deutscher or use his terminology. In a 1958 address to the World Jewish Congress, Deutscher coined the term “non-Jewish Jew” to describe revolutionaries like Karl Marx and Rosa Luxemburg. He argued that these Jews inherited ethical standards and an intellectual heritage from the religion of their birth, but that ultimately, they found Judaism “too narrow, too archaic, and too constricting. They all looked for ideals and fulfillment beyond it.” Their experience as European Jews living “on the margins of their respective nations” allowed them to reach beyond national boundaries to envision universal programs to combat oppression.

Goldman certainly fit Deutscher’s description. Despite her rejection of Judaism (and all other religions) as a stumbling block to the solidarity of humankind, Drinnon claimed that Goldman was still “one of the People of the Book,” an heir to Judaism’s “great ethical tradition which persistently stressed the rights of man and social justice” (p. 24).

Wexler agrees, and goes beyond Drinnon’s analysis to suggest several other ways in which Goldman was influenced by her Jewish heritage. She suggests that Goldman’s attitudes toward free love were a reaction to the Jewish tradition of arranged marriages. Goldman’s own father tried to keep her from studying by forcing her into marriage. He also sent Emma’s favorite sister into a deep depression by forbidding her to marry her “true love.” Wexler concludes that Gold-
man rebelled against her tyrannical father by rejecting his authority and ultimately by rejecting his religion.

Goldman's Jewish heritage was not entirely a negative influence. Wexler points to a tradition of strong Jewish women: "...many Jewish wives took an active or even exclusive role in supporting the family so that their husbands might study. Cultural tradition and the exigencies of poverty, in which most East European Jews lived, had fostered generations of assertive, energetic women, used to making their way in the world and to decision-making within the family" (p. 8). Goldman simply extended this traditional role beyond the home.

Despite these important insights, Wexler leaves several questions about Goldman's relationship to the Jewish community unaddressed. For example, Goldman was consistently antagonistic toward Yiddish anarchist groups, yet often depended on them to provide meeting halls and support. Moreover, she spent much of her life living within the Jewish community, was married to and divorced from Jacob Kersner by an Orthodox rabbi, chose Jews as lovers, surrounded herself with a small circle of Jewish confidants, and was brought to anarchism by immigrant Jewish radicals. Wexler even tells us that Goldman was proud to have the support of a prestigious Reform rabbi, Emil G. Hirsch (p. 92). Goldman may have been uncomfortable with Judaism as a religion, but she certainly felt "at home" in a Jewish environment.

Wexler does not attempt to explain why Goldman makes no mention of being Jewish or being influenced by Jewish ideas in her autobiography. Nor does Wexler explore the contradictions inherent in living within the American Jewish immigrant community and simultaneously claiming to reject that community. Because Wexler's account ends with Goldman's deportation, she does not speculate on how Goldman felt about returning to the country of her birth, a country with a long history of anti-Semitism. In fact, aside from references to childhood influences, Wexler barely discusses Goldman's Jewish identity. Such an omission is probably due to the lack of sources; Goldman, her correspondents, and even the newspapers that covered her mention her Jewish birth only rarely. Yet, the paucity of sources does not make the questions any less important, and while the omission of a discussion of Goldman's Jewish identity is understandable, it is no less regrettable.

Readers expecting to find new insights into Emma Goldman the Jew
will find *An Intimate Life* disappointing, but Wexler’s study is a “must” for those interested in the details of Goldman’s life in America and how they influenced her development as a political thinker.

—Faith Rogow

Faith Rogow is completing her doctoral dissertation, a study of the National Council of Jewish Women, at the State University of New York at Binghamton.
Brief Notices


Original letters have always fascinated the historian. They are both the stuff of which history is both written and miswritten. Nothing can be more convincing as historical evidence than original correspondence, but without the proper historical framework, and without the time-consuming task of checking dates and events, the letters can be utterly misleading.

Fortunately, in the Civil War letters of the young German-Jewish immigrant Marcus Spiegel, who rose to the rank of colonel in the Union Army and fought in Virginia, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana, we have both original correspondence, over one hundred letters, and a finely edited text, which includes scholarly notes from numerous historical sources, both primary and secondary. Indeed, this volume should serve as a model to others who may wish to publish original correspondence of importance to the American Jewish experience.


Judith E. Endelman's history of Indianapolis Jewry is a noteworthy contribution to those community histories which have helped us to understand the regional differences in the development of American Jewry. It is well written and relies upon an impressive set of documentation. It is especially noteworthy because it takes into account an entire set of newly formed questions which have been asked by young scholars of the American Jewish experience within the past decade. Ms. Endelman's work reflects many of those same questions. What is missing from this history, however, is much of what made William Toll's history of Portland, Oregon, Jewry so exciting and important. Toll's mastery of social-historical techniques allowed him to ask new and exciting questions about the sources of social and cultural change within Portland Jewry. One can only hope that ultimately a synthesis of the kind of history written by Endelman and many of the new areas of inquiry developed by Toll will become the model methodology for American Jewish communal history.


Floyd S. Fierman is the most distinguished authority on the history of Jews in the American Southwest. For over thirty years he has researched, written, and published the history of the Jews who came to the "new El Dorado" of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas when it opened up in the middle of the nineteenth century to find their fame and fortune.

For this latest volume, Fierman has chosen seven Jewish families who contributed mightily to the growth of the American Southwest. Their trials and tribulations, their failures and successes are the embodiment of the American Jewish experience. Fierman's wise advice to the new Jewish pioneers who are now beginning to arrive in the Southwest has been formed from an understanding of the historical experience of the first Jewish pioneers and the manner
in which they coexisted with their environment: "Give back to the community a portion of what it has given you."


I. L. Kenen has correctly proclaimed this important volume as an "indispensable encyclopedia concerning the critical years when many of us were deeply involved in the half century struggle to create the State of Israel." Dr. Halperin analyzes the various factors which affected the development of American Zionism, from organizational to religious to political, in the years following the Balfour Declaration. This is not the definitive history of American Zionism, but it has certainly pointed the direction in which such a history will surely have to travel.


The 1985 edition of the most important volume published on statistics and trends in American and world Jewish life includes two important articles on Latin American Jewry by Judith Laikin Elkin and by U. O. Schmelz and Sergio Della Pergola.


It is most appropriate that this lovely biography of Edith Rosenwald Stern should be written by Gerda Weissmann Klein. Ms. Klein, a Holocaust survivor, has written of her own life and of her special hope for the renewal of truth, beauty, and righteousness after the enormous tragedy which the Holocaust and its consequences created for all humankind.

Truth, beauty, and righteousness were also hopes shared by Edith Rosenwald Stern. As the daughter of an immensely wealthy businessman and the founder of Sears and Roebuck, Julius Rosenwald, Edith Rosenwald Stern could have grown up as the "little rich girl," never wanting, never needing, and never caring for anyone born to less than she. But for Edith there was a special legacy handed down to her by her father, Julius, whose philanthropic efforts on behalf of Jews, Christians, and black Americans deserve their own biography. Edith Stern, however, accepted an even older legacy, and that is what makes this biography worth reading and understanding. Her family's generosity, as well as her own, she once explained, was a "Jewish trait. We were brought up with the philosophy of the Old Testament. You remember it states that one is permitted to glean one's field only once. Thereafter, others can partake.... One has to give a tithe." Edith Rosenwald Stern understood the essence of Judaism and practiced it.


One cannot even attempt to write the history of the American needle trades and the women who made up the majority of their working force without documenting the presence and influence of Jewish women. This first-rate collection of essays has managed to do this while at the same time detailing the changes within the worklife of these women as America became an industrial nation. The volume covers the period from pre-1900 to the present, and it is in the middle section, entitled "The Great Uprisings: 1900—1920," as well as in an essay on Dorothy Jacobs Bellanca, that the role of Jewish women is highlighted and explained.
For modern Jews, a largely urban people by historical designation, the American frontier offered a series of challenges and opportunities unlike anything they had ever experienced. Those that accepted the challenge either disappeared into the wild that could swallow them up as Jews or thrived and contributed mightily to the growth of their region.

Anna and Isadore Elkan Solomon, Jewish immigrants from Posen, settled in the southeastern Arizona Territory in 1876. They settled on the banks of the Gila River, “Southern Arizona’s great life-giver.” The Solomons, too, would become great life-givers to the economic prosperity of the Gila Valley and to the appropriately named Solomonville, until 1915 the “largest and busiest trading center in Graham County.”

*From Charcoal to Banking* is a social history of Jewish perseverance against Indian raids, economic ups and downs, and the cruel hardship of the frontier. But the Solomons succeeded for nearly a half-century of activity which distinguished them as people of special spirit and character.

Elizabeth L. Ramenofsky has, as a granddaughter of the Solomons, produced this volume as a labor of love. Fortunately, she has also used extensive historical resources and a sharp and clear writing style to produce a fine volume and an important contribution to the history of Arizona Jewry.


With the centenary of the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion just a decade past, and with the centenary celebration of both the Jewish Theological Seminary and Yeshiva University about to begin, Marc Lee Raphael’s volume is both timely and relevant. Together with Jacob Marcus and Abraham Peck’s volume on *The American Rabbinate: A Century of Continuity and Change, 1883–1983*, the American Jewish community will have a chance to evaluate, along with the individual movements, just how far American Judaism has come, and what is needed to ensure that its future will be a healthy and secure one. Marc Lee Raphael has written an indispensable historical guide to American Judaism, and its place will surely be a seminal one within the field.


We have, as American Jews, taken a certain amount of pride in our political radicals, those Jews whom Isaac Deutscher has defined as belonging to a tradition of Jews “who went beyond the boundaries of Jewry. They all found Jewry too narrow, too archaic, and too constricting. . . . They all looked for ideals and fulfillment beyond it.”

Gerald Sorin has examined the lives of nearly two hundred Jewish radicals of Eastern European origin, some whose names are obscure but others, such as Clara Lemlich, Emma Goldman, Rose Pesotta, Rose Pastor Stokes, Abraham Cahan, and Morris Hillquit, whose names still evoke visions of a proud Jewish socialist heritage.

Unlike Spinoza, Marx, Heine, or Rosa Luxembourg, whose struggles constituted major chapters in world and Jewish history, most of these American Jewish socialists were content to man or woman a picket line or organize a union. And unlike Deutscher’s classification for this type of Jew, as “the non-Jewish Jew,” Sorin finds that the great majority of the American
radicals brought to their socialist ideals Jewish values and traditions which merged successfully and without much psychological conflict.

It was the ideals of the Prophets which most influenced these Jewish men and women, and which allowed them to fuse their socialism and their Jewishness into the great quest for social justice. One wonders, then, what significance the role of Prophetic Judaism, as developed within the Reform movement at about the same time, played in all of this.

Did the Reform rabbis of the late nineteenth century fear that the socialism brought to American shores by the East European radicals would spell the death-knell for organized religious Judaism? Did they elevate Prophetic Judaism to the forefront of the movement as a counter to the seductive appeal of the socialist message?

What is most important, however, is the pride that American Jewry can take in the role played by this “prophetic minority” in the creation of conditions which helped all ethnic groups in the struggle against unfair labor practices. Even the somewhat disappointed attitude of one former labor organizer about the workers of today is only partially negative: “When I see the workers spending their free hours watching television—trash. We fought so hard for those hours and they waste them... Well, they’re free to do what they want. That’s what we fought for.” And that is exactly the point.


There are a few great builders of organized Jewish learning in America and Israel that come immediately to mind. One can quote the names Isaac Mayer Wise, Solomon Schechter, Bernard Revel, Judah Magnes, Stephen S. Wise and Abram Sachar without difficulty, but then the list begins to thin. One name that must be added to this list of great builders is Professor Moshe Davis.

In 1959 Moshe Davis established the very important Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. That by itself would be a great achievement, but Professor Davis is not one to rest on past laurels. In 1980, he founded the International Center for the University Teaching of Jewish Civilization, which may ultimately equal or even eclipse the Institute of Contemporary Jewry in influence and importance.

Among the important and relevant contributions to the Festschrift for Professor Davis are essays on American Jewish sermons by Naomi W. Cohen; German-Russian Jewish confrontation in America by Abraham J. Karp; Yiddish as a catalyst in American Zionism by Shu- lamit Nardi; an agenda for American Jews: a new perspective by Eli Ginzberg; contemporary historians of New York Jewry by Lloyd P. Gartner; the Americanization of Canadian Zionism, 1917–1982 by Michael Brown; and American Jewish-Christian relations after the Holocaust by Alfred Gottschalk.
IN MEMORIAM:
Maurice Jacobs
1896–1984

Maurice Jacobs was a good friend of the American Jewish Archives; he was a generous supporter; for many years he printed its semiannual journal. The biographical lexica knew him as a printer; he was much more than that. It is literally true that he had been the president or director or board member of at least a dozen different national Jewish organizations. He was not a joiner; he was a worker. When he took on a job to serve a national institution he gave it his soul, his devotion, his energy; unquestionably he was one of the country’s outstanding Jewish communal workers. Among the societies, movements, and institutions for which he labored were the American Jewish Historical Society, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the B’nai B’rith, the National Jewish Welfare Board, the National Interfraternity Conference, the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods, Delaware Valley College, Brandeis University, Dropsie College, and the Yivo Institute for Jewish Research. His walls were decorated with well over thirty citations from important American Jewish institutions. When I once suggested that he take down this imposing array of plaques and illuminated manuscripts, he replied with a grin: “If I do the walls will collapse.”

For years he was executive vice-president of the Jewish Publication Society. He did an excellent job, but the board, businessmen, were very concerned about balancing their budget; Jacobs, a lover of the printed word, believed that his first duty was to print and distribute good books, to raise the cultural standards of American Jewry. It was not his job, so he believed, to show a profit. Thus it was that the Jewish Publication Society and Jacobs parted company. The board sold him their Hebrew press. He took a few outworn Monotype machines, and under the name of Maurice Jacobs, Inc., he built the finest Jewish and
Hebrew press this country had yet known. He recruited multilingual immigrants, sent them to graduate schools, saw that they received their Ph.D. degrees, and then employed them as typesetters! He could print in over 160 different languages, including Tshiluba and Ragoli.

Jacobs was much more than a great printer who produced beautiful books. He was a fine, courteous gentleman; no man or woman turned to him in vain for help, advice, encouragement. No task was too difficult for him; he was never too busy to lend a helping hand. He never gossiped or berated any human being. "Maury," as his friends and family called him, was kind, gentle, unassuming, generous, loyal. His intimates admired him, respected him, cherished his friendship. There is a Jewish folk tradition that there are always thirty-six Jews who sustain the world through their goodness. They themselves are unconscious of their deeds, their merits; the world knows them not, yet it is because of them that we are here today. Those of us who knew and loved this man believe that he was one of the thirty-six immortals.

—Jacob Rader Marcus
FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS, 1986–87

The American Jewish Archives announces the availability of four fellowship programs for 1986–87.

The RABBI HARVEY B. FRANKLIN MEMORIAL AWARD IN AMERICAN JEWISH STUDIES is available to ABDs (doctoral dissertation stage) for two months of active research or writing at the American Jewish Archives during the stipend year. The stipend is $1,500 and the application deadline is April 1, 1986. Applicants must provide an up-to-date curriculum vitae, as well as three faculty recommendations, one of which must be from the dissertation supervisor. These will constitute the application forms.

The MARGUERITE R. JACOBS MEMORIAL POST-DOCTORAL AWARD IN AMERICAN JEWISH STUDIES is available for post-doctoral candidates for two months of active research or writing at the American Jewish Archives during the stipend year. The stipend is $2,000 and the application deadline is April 1, 1986. Applicants must provide an up-to-date curriculum vitae, evidence of published research, and two recommendations from academic colleagues. These will constitute the application forms.

The LOEWENSTEIN-WIENER SUMMER FELLOWSHIP AWARDS IN AMERICAN JEWISH STUDIES are available to ABDs or post-doctoral candidates for one month of research or writing at the American Jewish Archives during the stipend year. The stipend is $750 for ABDs and $2,000 for post-doctoral candidates, and the deadline for application is April 1, 1986. Applicants must provide an up-to-date curriculum vitae and evidence of published research, where possible. ABDs must provide three faculty recommendations (including dissertation supervisor's), and post-doctoral candidates must provide two recommendations from academic colleagues. These will constitute the application forms.

The BERNARD AND AUDRE RAPOPORT FELLOWSHIPS IN AMERICAN JEWISH STUDIES are available to post-doctoral candi-
dates for research or writing at the American Jewish Archives for a period of up to three months during the stipend year. The stipend is $1,000 per month up to a maximum of $3,000. Application deadline is April 1, 1986. Applicants must provide an up-to-date curriculum vitae, evidence of published research, and two recommendations from academic colleagues. These will constitute the application forms.

For more information concerning these fellowship programs, write to the Administrative Director of the American Jewish Archives, 3101 Clifton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220.
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