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Isaac Leeser and the Protestantization of American Judaism

Lance J. Sussman

Protestant Christianity's influence on the development of American Reform Judaism is an acknowledged fact. The author argues, however, that this Protestant influence, through the person of Isaac Leeser, played an equally important role in the shaping of Orthodox and Conservative Judaism in this country.

Yankees in Yarmulkes: Small Town Jewish Life in Eastern Long Island

Helene Gerard

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Mordecai Kaplan, The Teachers Institute, and the Foundations of Jewish Education in America

Mel Scult

Who could best teach our Jewish children and thus insure the survival of American Judaism. Was it "the rabbi and the teacher located within the synagogue" or "a community educational system with a support apparatus of Jewish welfare agencies?" This was the dilemma which faced Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan and other leaders of the New York Jewish community in the early years of the twentieth century.
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Brief Notices

Selected Acquisitions
Isaac Leeser and the Protestantization of American Judaism

Lance J. Sussman

In attempting to understand Judaism in America during the nineteenth century, historians have largely focused on the development of the Reform movement and on the origins of Conservative Judaism. Significantly less attention has been paid to the history of traditional Judaism in America prior to 1880. Yet, one can argue that Orthodoxy dominated American Jewish religious life during most of the nineteenth century. In 1861, according to Leon Jick, whose own book, The Americanization of the Synagogue, 1820–1870, emphasizes the centrality of the Reform movement in nineteenth-century American Judaism, there were more than two hundred Orthodox synagogues in the United States and only eight Reform congregations. “Among the eight,” Jick added, “were a number that would be considered, by twentieth-century standards, Conservative.”

Orthodox Judaism in antebellum America was a relatively large and unquestionably complex phenomenon. A core of five Sephardic synagogues was established during the eighteenth century. Although they followed the Sephardic rite, by 1720, the majority of their members were of Central European descent. Beginning in 1802, with the founding of the Rodef Shalom congregation in Philadelphia, Ashkenazic Jews began organizing synagogues of their own. As immigration swelled their ranks, new synagogues, particularly in larger cities, were increasingly organized along subethnic lines. By the 1840’s, highly Americanized Orthodox Ashkenazic congregations, such as New York’s B’nai Jeshurun, successfully competed with the Sephardic synagogues for the leadership of the Jewish community.

Lay domination of the early American synagogue, widespread ignorance of Jewish law, the absence of ordained rabbis until 1840, and the need to conform to the mores of American society combined to make religious accommodationism a normative part of Orthodox Jewish life in America prior to the Civil War. Although this trend was most pronounced among reformers, it also broadly existed among tradi-
Isaac Leeser’s Central Role

The most important spokesman of traditional Judaism in the United States who selectively advocated the Protestantization of American Judaism was Isaac Leeser (1806–68). Four of his Protestantizing activities were eventually taken over by the American Jewish community as a whole. These included regular vernacular preaching, the transformation of the traditional office of hazzan into a Jewish ministry, the establishment of the Jewish Sunday school, and the widespread use of an English-language Jewish Bible translated by Leeser himself. Leeser also developed an eclectic theology that stressed the themes of man’s sinfulness, the coming of a Messiah, and the restoration of the Jewish people to the land of Israel. Although a full-scale treatment of his theology is beyond the scope of this paper, it is interesting to note that a radical reformer, Samuel Hirsch, contemptuously—but, in part, correctly—called Leeser’s theology an Abklatsch (“poor imitation”) of English-Christian Methodism.
Leeser was a ubiquitous figure in American Jewish life from 1830 to 1868. "Practically every form of Jewish activity which supports American Jewish life today," wrote historian and Reform Rabbi Bertram W. Korn, "was established or envisaged by this one man," and "almost every kind of publication which is essential to Jewish survival was written, translated or fostered by him." Indeed, it is no exaggeration to call the antebellum period in American Jewish history, the "Age of Leeser." Included among his firsts were the first volumes of sermons delivered and published by an American Jewish religious leader (1837–68); the first complete American translation of the Sephardic prayerbook (1837); the first Hebrew primer for children (1838); the first successful American Jewish magazine-newspaper, the Occident and American Jewish Advocate (1843–69); the first American Jewish publication society (1845); the first complete English translation of the Ashkenazic prayerbook (1848); the first Hebrew "high school" (1849); the first English translation of the entire Bible by an American Jew (1853); and the first American Jewish theological seminary—the short-lived Maimonides College (1867). He also served as a vice president of the first Jewish defense organization—the Board of Delegates of American Israelites (1859).

Protestant Influences on American Jewry

Isaac Leeser's role as the leading Protestantizer of American Judaism in the first half of the nineteenth century is best understood against the background of the general history of religion in America during that period. Following the "Second Great Awakening," resurgent Protestant churches sought to make America a godly nation. Missionary activity was increased at home and abroad with impressive results. Between 1800 and 1830, church membership in the United States nearly doubled. Various Protestant denominations supported the American Bible Society (1816) and the American Tract Society (1825), which succeeded in broadly disseminating religious literature in all sectors of American society. Finally, Baptists, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, and others established numerous theological seminaries as well as secular colleges, thereby fortifying Protestantism's intellectual foundations. By the beginning of the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, the role of Protestantism
in American society had become so great that Alexis de Tocqueville observed upon his arrival in the United States in 1831 that "there is no country in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America."8

As a tiny minority in a vast land, Jews were faced with the classic dilemma of wanting to derive the benefits of assimilation while simultaneously preserving their separate identity as an ethno-religious community.9 Fortunately, Protestants were generally inclined to look benevolently on the Jews. First, they were the children of Abraham, living representatives of the Israelites of the Bible. As such, even the foreignness of Jewish immigrants was forgivable. Moreover, Jews played an important role in God's ultimate plan for humanity. The presence of a remnant of the House of Israel in America was perceived as proof that the Almighty had not forgotten His promise of redemption. On the other hand, Catholics, not Jews, received the brunt of religious animus during the antebellum period as a result of nativist suspicions about the purposes of the Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy and fear that the growing Catholic population would eventually achieve a majority in the American electorate.10

Moreover, a high degree of social contact existed between antebellum Jews and their Gentile neighbors. Jews frequently attended church as guests or curious onlookers and became familiar with many Christian practices. Likewise, Christians occasionally attended synagogues, creating a need among Jews to showcase Judaism in the best possible light.11

Finally, American Judaism during the Early National period was both institutionally and intellectually weak. American Jewry, whose population was only three thousand as late as 1815, suffered from an "orthodoxy of salutary neglect" that had prevailed in American Jewish religious life since the seventeenth century. A high rate of intermarriage, apostasy, and indigenous calls for reform all testified to the precarious condition of the religious life of American Jewry. Innovators and traditionalists alike agreed that if Judaism was to survive in America, a new vision of Judaism would be needed to inspire its adherents, redefine its goals, and, ultimately, provide it with a viable institutional infrastructure.

It is possible that Leeser was more deeply influenced by the Episcopal Church than by other Protestant denominations. In both Rich-
mond, Virginia, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania—the two cities where Leeser lived—the Protestant Episcopal Church was particularly strong, especially among the social and intellectual elite. Leeser shared their “High Church” liturgical sensibilities and probably looked favorably on their form of church government. The problem among Episcopalians of reestablishing a bishopric in America after the Revolution is even analogous to Leeser’s lifelong concern with organizing a national ecclesiastical structure, including a Bet Din (Jewish religious court), among Jews. In his own life, he had good personal relations with several Episcopalian clergymen, especially Dr. Joseph Jacquett, a scholarly Episcopalian minister in Philadelphia, with whom Leeser co-edited a Biblia Hebraica (1848). Lastly, there is little question that Leeser was an anglophile and corresponded regularly with such notable English Jews as Grace Aguilar and Sir Moses Montefiore, as well as with British rabbis.

From the very beginning of his public career as a Jewish religious leader, Isaac Leeser clearly understood that to save American Judaism from extinction it would be necessary to adapt it more completely to the American scene. Enthusiastic about the industriousness of his age and devoted to the religion of his ancestors, Leeser systematically attempted to lay the foundations for a new, vital Judaism in America during the antebellum period. Leeser believed, according to one historian, “that there should be a conscious and selective acceptance of American cultural elements into Jewish life, lest the unconscious, unthinking and unselective espousal of Americanism go too far.”

**Leeser’s Education and Early Life**

Isaac Leeser arrived in the United States in the spring of 1824 at the age of eighteen. He was born in the little village of Neuenkirchen in Prussian Westphalia on December 12, 1806, and moved to nearby Duelmen in 1814 after the death of his mother. In Duelmen, Leeser received a traditional but limited formal Jewish education in a local heder. In 1820, after his father’s death, Leeser resettled in the provincial capital, Muenster, and enrolled at a local Catholic academy to begin his secular education. The Muenster Academy, which had attained full university status in 1717, had been reduced to a gymnasium after Prussia’s reabsorption of the Kingdom of Westphalia in 1818.
Nevertheless, Leeser was able to pursue a broad course of studies, including mathematics and Latin.17

While studying at the academy, Leeser also attended the Jewish Institute of Muenster, where he came under the influence of the Landrabbinner, Abraham Sutro (1784–1869). “Sutro,” according to a biographer, “was part of the first generation of German rabbis who combined strict traditionalism with certain innovations. . . . He wore an old-fashioned beard and was one of the earliest rabbis to deliver German sermons.”18 However, Leeser’s education in Germany did not include advanced halachic training. Later in life, he frequently pointed out to friends and foes alike that he had never prepared for rabbinic ordination and always deferred in matters of Jewish law to those of greater learning.

Leeser’s Bibliocentrism

In 1824, orphaned, penniless, and with few prospects for improving his situation, Leeser accepted the invitation of his prosperous maternal uncle, Zalma Rehine, to resettle in Richmond, Virginia. Association with the Jews of Richmond and the cultural environment of tidewater Virginia had a decisive impact on Leeser. In just five years, he not only mastered English but was also able to synthesize his traditional Jewish upbringing in Germany with his new life in America. When Leeser left Richmond in 1829 to become the hazzan of Congregation Mickveh Israel in Philadelphia, he had already formulated a Protestantized bibliocentric approach to Judaism, which became the backbone of his program for American Jewry.19

In a manuscript written in Richmond but not published until 1834, Leeser outlined his belief in a historical revelation at Sinai and concluded that the only source of religious truth was the Bible. Faith in the veracity of the biblical account and in the truth of biblical doctrines was, according to Leeser, the exclusive basis of Judaism. He further maintained that neither human reason nor intuition could ever discover eternal truth without the benefit of historical revelation. Moreover, in his opinion, no later Jewish teaching could possibly contradict the Bible. He maintained that Judaism was fully developed prior to the Babylonian exile in 586 B.C.E. and that the rabbis correctly applied biblical teachings in postbiblical times.20
Leeser developed his bibliocentric approach to Judaism in the hundreds of sermons and lectures he delivered from 1830 to 1867. Of all his accomplishments, his role as the pioneer Jewish preacher in the United States was closest to his heart. On being honored by friends in March 1861, Leeser responded to the tribute by saying, “You have spoken of my sermons; and indeed, if I have any merit, it is to these that I point.” Yet up till 1830, when he gave his first sermon, Leeser had heard but a dozen addresses, either from the pulpit or elsewhere.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, formal preaching in the synagogue in both Europe and America was generally limited to two Sabbaths per year and at special events that were often connected to official government requests for public demonstrations of religious concern. In Germany, reformers were the first to preach in the vernacular on a regular basis. They consciously modeled their sermons on the pattern of Christian homiletics and even used Christian guides to the art of preaching. In England, on the other hand, a Committee of Elders at the Orthodox Bevis Marks Sephardic Synagogue in London recommended in 1818 that “approved” sermons be given on a scriptural text every Saturday afternoon.

Although Leeser was aware of developments in Germany and England, he was more directly influenced by the strong American Protestant tradition of preaching, which extended back to the Puritans. “Sermons,” he wrote in 1845, could “exercise an influence over the mind of society, which we now can hardly have any idea of. What does any one think would be the fate of Protestant Christianity without the constant appeal to the fear and reason of its professors from the ten thousand pulpits which scatter information and admonition many times during every week?” Similarly, he believed that the fate of Judaism greatly depended on the establishment of the sermon as a permanent part of synagogue life in the United States.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the American pulpit was filled with many fine preachers, including Henry Ward Beecher (Congregationalist), Peter Cartwright (Methodist), and Charles G. Finney (Revivalist). In Philadelphia, Leeser and many of his congregants had direct contact with William Henry Furness (1802–1896), a Unitarian minister who was a popular speaker with Christians and
Jews alike. Moreover, between 1826 and 1834, more than three thousand lyceums were established in the United States as forums for adult education. Thus, it is not surprising that a group of women from Mickveh Israel approached Leeser and asked him to give “popular discourses” on the Jewish religion.

The influence of Protestantism on Leeser’s religious thinking was particularly strong during his early years as a preacher. For example, during the course of 1830—the first year he preached—Leeser’s sermon titles included “Confidence in God,” “Want of Faith,” and “Pious Reflections.” In his sermons, Leeser frequently talked about the truth and permanence of biblical teachings, discussing man’s battle with sin and irreligion and, most of all, emphasizing Judaism’s eschatological doctrines, including the belief in a Messiah, Restoration, and the promise of eternal life. Later in his career, Leeser continued to discuss the same topics. However, during the 1840’s and 1850’s, he not only differentiated between his religious views and Christian theology but also polemicized against the non-Orthodox beliefs espoused by Jewish reformers in America.

Although Leeser did not experience any resistance to introducing the sermon into the synagogue, and his preaching eventually received official sanction from the board of Mickveh Israel (1843), neither did he receive much encouragement beyond the close circle of friends who had originally prevailed upon him to assume the role of a Jewish preacher. He probably did not become a popular preacher because of the staidness of his public presentations. According to the fashion of the day, each of his discourses lasted approximately forty-five minutes. He began with an original prayer and then developed a single theological theme around a biblical verse selected from the weekly Torah portion. He rarely told stories or used other illustrative materials and consciously chose not to appeal to his congregants’ emotions. Most often, his only illustrations were additional biblical references.

Despite the literary shortcomings of his own work, Leeser made the sermon an integral part of the Jewish worship service in the United States. He published a ten-volume collection of his sermons, traveled around the country as a guest preacher, and reproduced a broad sampling of American and European sermons in his monthly journal, the *Occident and American Jewish Advocate*. Almost singlehandedly, Leeser made sermons a form of devotional literature widely read by
American Jews during his time. Most importantly, he viewed preaching as the central activity of the Jewish religious leader in America and advocated the transformation of the office of hazzan into a Jewish ministry based on the Protestant model.

The Hazzanate in America

In the absence of ordained rabbis in America until the 1840's, the hazzan, a semitrained religious officiant, had already become the principal Jewish religious specialist in the American synagogue prior to the Revolution. However, in the Colonial synagogue, the hazzan served as a religious functionary under the direct control and strict supervision of the congregational board of trustees. In addition to chanting the service, his duties included teaching the children Hebrew along with the rudiments of the Jewish religion. In small congregations and remote locations, the hazzan also served as the shochet, mohel, and shammas. Salaries were very low, and the individual hazzan was not held in high esteem by the congregation.

To some extent, however, the eighteenth-century American hazzan was already considered as a "minister." Several factors contributed to this early evolution of the American Jewish ministry. First, Jews frequently had to be represented to the general public by a minister, and the hazzan was the only official who could serve in that role. The second factor was that early American Jews had very little Jewish knowledge, and their hazzanim, however poorly trained, were still the only available resident experts in Jewish law. Third, already by 1654, New York had authorized only two classes of officials, ministers of religion and justices of the peace, to perform the marriage ceremony. Likewise, state laws of incorporation for religious societies often specified particular ministerial functions.

Gershom M. Seixas (1746–1816), by virtue of his exceptional personality, was the first to demonstrate the full potential of the office of hazzan in America. He was respected by the two congregations he served, Shearith Israel (New York, 1768–1776 and 1784–1816) and Mickveh Israel (Philadelphia, 1780–1784), was considered a colleague by many Christian clergymen, and also served as a trustee of Columbia College. However, Seixas was an exception. Most of the early American hazzanim were intellectually and socially unable to
match his achievements and simply performed their limited tasks without distinction.

**Isaac Leeser**

Upgrading America's Jewish Clergy

The board of Mickveh Israel certainly did not expect the twenty-two-year-old Isaac Leeser to promote actively the professionalization of the office of hazzan when they hired him in the fall of 1829. However, a series of degrading incidents early in Leeser's career quickly led him to the conclusion that only a trained, adequately paid, contractually secure, native American Jewish ministry could properly serve the religious needs of Jews in the United States. In an editorial article in the Occident in 1846, he wrote:

Let it then be a first step in the reformation of the personnel of our ministry to place its members above want, and then demand that every incumbent should be fit to grace the station which he fills.35

Leeser clearly viewed the Protestant clergy as a model for the American Jewish ministry. In an article, "The Demands of the Times," published in October 1844, Leeser noted that "there is hardly any Christian society which does not strain every nerve to have an intelligent and virtuous ministry, composed of men who would honour any calling by their acquisition and general good conduct."36 "Jews," he wrote subsequently, "have hitherto been neglectful in the greatest duty they owe themselves, to rear up from among themselves persons to fill the important office of minister of religion."37

Unfortunately, few members of Mickveh Israel liked Leeser as a person or fully understood his efforts on behalf of Judaism. They simply expected him to behave as a paid functionary and be obedient to the officers of the congregation. After twenty-one stormy years as hazzan at Mickveh Israel, Leeser left the post in anger and disappointment.38 However, in numerous editorials in the Occident, Leeser continued to make the question of the role of the Jewish ministry in the United States an important issue of the day.39 Equally important is that, through his vast personal contacts as well as in the Advertising Supplement to the Occident, Leeser played a crucial role in the placement of scores of hazzanim in the country for more than a quarter of a century.40
For more than twenty-five years, Leeser also urged the establishment of a “College for the Education of Youth for the Ministry” to create an American Jewish ministry. Again, he used Christian theological schools as his model and appealed to affluent Jews for material support.

We ask those whom God has blessed with plenty, with superabundance, with more than they or their families can conveniently consume, whether they will not do that for Judaism which so many Christians do for Christianity? In every direction colleges and schools are rising up, even in far off Wisconsin . . . supported by the munificence of churches or individual endowments. Jews alone stand aloof. . . . They seem to feel no shame at the humiliating spectacle of their spiritual dependence.

Unfortunately, Maimonides College (1867–1873), the fruit of his labors, only attracted four full-time students and closed before any of them completed their studies. However, as the first American Jewish theological seminary, Maimonides College helped establish Leeser’s vision of a Jewish ministry as the norm for Jewish religious leadership in the United States.

Leeser was fully aware that what he termed a “Jewish minister” was not a rabbi in the traditional sense of the word. In an editorial entitled “The Ministry,” in August 1866, he openly acknowledged the novelty of his views.

Perhaps it will be urged as making against us that by our present plans we shall be able to raise Rabbins in this country for . . . there will be no time for extensive Talmudical study. We confess that it is so. But for the present and years to come, we need ministers and teachers more than those thoroughly versed in all the casuistry of Judaism, and for this purpose we are perfectly willing to depend on Europe, or Asia, or Africa for some considerable time, till the period when Jewish literature and learning shall have pitched their tent on the western Hemisphere.

The First Jewish Sunday School

Not only did Leeser seek to Protestantize Jewish religious leadership in America in its institutional (although not its theological) aspects, but he also hoped to create a new type of Jewish congregant whose piety and religious education would be modeled after those of his Christian neighbors. “We want ministers,” Leeser wrote in the Occident, “so also do we want an enlightened community.”
Jewish education, Leeser believed, was the way to attain this goal. After several unsuccessful attempts at creating a Jewish day school, Leeser, along with Rebecca Gratz, opened a Jewish Sunday school in Philadelphia in 1838. Two years after its opening, Leeser wrote the following:

Sunday schools are nothing new among our Christian neighbours, as many sects of them have had such establishments for shorter or longer periods. Among our people, however, the case is very different, as far as the knowledge of the writer extends. . . . As may easily be imagined, some prejudice was at first manifested by various persons, who fancied that they discovered an objectionable imitation of gentile practices in this undertaking, forgetting that it is the first duty of Israel to instil knowledge of divine things in the hearts of the young, and this institution was eminently calculated to bestow this necessary blessing alike upon rich and poor without fee or price. It is but seldom that so noble an aim has been sought after, begun solely for the glorification of our Maker and the well-being of his people; it is therefore gratifying to record, that this unfounded prejudice has nearly died away.45

While still in Richmond, Leeser had already helped Isaac B. Seixas, a nephew of Gershom Seixas and the hazzan of Beth Shalome, run a school on Saturdays and Sundays. However, this early experiment proved to be ephemeral. The Philadelphia Sunday school, on the other hand, succeeded for several reasons. First, the Protestant Sunday school by 1830 had ceased to function as a general school for poor and frontier children and had fully embraced a religion-oriented curriculum.46 Second, the public school movement was beginning to strike deep roots in the general community and often left Jewish parents with few options as to when they could arrange lessons for their children's Jewish education. Third, the Sunday school was supported by the women of the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society, many of whom served as teachers.47 Lastly, Leeser, now a mature individual and an established author, was in a position to help supply the school with appropriate children's religious literature.

Leeser's *Catechism*, an expansion of Eduard Kley's *Catechismus der Mosaischen Religion* (Berlin, 1814), as well as several works written by some of the Sunday-school teachers under Leeser's supervision, quickly became the standard text of Jewish Sunday schools in the United States.48 Initially the Sunday school had to rely on Christian educational materials in which religiously objectionable passages
were either pasted over or torn out by Gratz’s staff.49 Although Leeser preferred Jewish parochial schools and advocated their establishment throughout his career, his efforts to develop Jewish Sunday schools proved more enduring.

The Leeser Bible

Isaac Leeser’s literary magnum opus and most lasting contribution to the Protestantization of Judaism in America was his English translation of the Bible (1853-54).50 He drew on a wide variety of Jewish sources, especially the German-language Bible edited by Leopold Zunz (1838) and the one annotated by Ludwig Philipson (1854). Leeser’s Bible was neither a translation of a translation nor an entirely original work. Rather, using his own religious views as criteria, he pieced together an English-language Bible based on Jewish exegetical traditions. With regard to style, however, Leeser endeavored “to adhere closely to the ordinary English version,” which, he maintained, “for simplicity cannot be surpassed.”51 In fact, Leeser viewed his Bible as the Jewish successor to the King James Version. “It would be a species of mental slavery,” he wrote his readers, “to rely for ever upon the arbitrary decree of a deceased King of England, who certainly was no prophet, for the correct understanding of Scripture.”52 “Though the slight verbal changes grated upon the ears of us the older generation,” a sympathetic Rosa Mordecai recollected in 1901, “the constant reading and reciting from it in Sunday School made it familiar to the young.”53

The “Leeser Bible” originally was complemented by a very modest commentary that mainly reported variant translations from German-Jewish Bibles. Subsequently, with the second edition, the commentary was reduced to a few notes placed at the end. Thus, like other “Protestant” Bibles, the Leeser version emphasized the “Word” itself and not the commentaries. In its appearance, the Leeser Bible also functioned as a Protestantizing instrument. Initially, it appeared in quarto size, appropriate for use on a pulpit. Later, it was also bound in white leather and used for sacramental purposes at weddings and confirmation services.44 Thus, Leeser’s rendition of the Holy Scriptures clearly identified American Jewry with its biblical past and even drew high praise from many Christians, including Charles Hodge, the leading
Isaac Leeser "Old-School Presbyterian" theologian, who called for a similar work by a Protestant scholar.  

Conclusion

The legacy of Isaac Leeser’s Protestantizing activities was both rich and enduring. His Bible won wide acceptance among both the Sephardim and the German Jews. Later, in the early part of the twentieth century, it was widely distributed among East European Jews by the Hebrew Publishing Company. Similarly, the Leeser-inspired Sunday school movement was first accepted among the Sephardim. With the decline of Jewish parochial schools after 1855, Sunday schools also found acceptance in German congregations and thus became the dominant form of Jewish education in the United States. During the 1850’s, vernacular preaching in the American synagogue also won broad acceptance. Besides Leeser, Samuel M. Isaacs, Max Lilienthal, and, most importantly, Morris J. Raphall all contributed to the popularization of the Jewish sermon in America.

The creation of a Jewish ministry in the United States, however, proved to be a highly problematic undertaking. “In the emerging American-Jewish pattern,” writes Leon Jick, “congregational life continued to be dominated by laymen, and rabbis were frequently reminded of the precariousness of their position.” Thus, at the beginning of the 1850’s virtually every religious leader of standing was repudiated by his congregation. Lilienthal, Isaac Mayer Wise, and Leeser lost their positions, Leo Merzbacher’s post at Emanu-El was in serious jeopardy, and Abraham Rice resigned and went into the dry goods business. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, Leeser’s vision of a professionalized Jewish ministry became the norm for Jewish religious leaders in the United States and still broadly serves as the basis for the American rabbinate, except in the most sectarian areas of Orthodox Jewish life.

Remarkably, as the spectrum of Jewish religious life in American broadened during the 1840’s and 1850’s with the rise of Reform Judaism and the arrival of ordained Orthodox rabbis in the United States, Leeser did not abandon his efforts to adapt traditional Judaism to American culture. Until the end of his life, he remained convinced that he could create a context wherein a Protestantized Orthodoxy could
serve as a unifying force among American Jews and even attempted on several occasions to organize national ecclesiastical bodies to regulate Jewish religious life in the United States.\(^7\) His contributions to the Protestantization of mid-nineteenth-century American Judaism had an effect on the development of modern Orthodoxy as well as Reform and, ultimately, Conservative Judaism in America. Thus, in effect, he played an important role in the transformation and perpetuation of the Jewish heritage in America.

Rabbi Lance J. Sussman is completing his doctoral dissertation, a biography of Isaac Leeser, at the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati.

Notes

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1. Jeffrey S. Gurock, *American Jewish History: A Bibliographical Guide* (New York, 1983), pp. 33–39. The terms “traditional Judaism” and “Orthodoxy” are used interchangeably in this article. Both of these approaches to the Jewish heritage are based on a supernatural view of “Torah from Sinai,” and both recognize the authority of *Halachah* in the regulation of Jewish religious life.


Isaac Leeser

5. *Die Deborah* 13 (December 27, 1867): 98.
11. The concept of "showcasing" Judaism was suggested to me by Prof. Jonathan D. Sarna.
17. When he emigrated to America, Leeser brought his student notebooks with him. The original manuscripts are housed at Dropsie College, Leeser Papers.

19. Leeser, Jews and the Mosaic Law. Several times during the course of his career, Leeser referred to Jews and the Mosaic Law as the definitive statement of his belief in revelation and as a summary of his view of the Bible; see Occident 3, p. 189, and 12, p. 539.


22. Discourses 10, p. 313. Also see Isaac Leeser, “Preface” (to Jerusalem), supplement of Occident 9, p. xiv.


29. Discourses 1, p. 2, see note.

30. Ibid., pp. v–vi.


35. Occident 3, p. 582.

36. Ibid. 2, pp. 313–314.

37. Ibid. 3, p. 577.


40. Prof. A. Karp of Rochester, New York, directed me to the Occident’s Advertising Supplement as an important but neglected source of data about the American Jewish experience, 1843–69. For example, see Advertising Supplement to the Occident 24, no. 7 (1866): 3, which includes five notices by congregations looking for hazzanim/teachers:

HAZAN WANTED

The congregation B’nai Israel, Augusta, Ga., is desirous of engaging the services of a gentleman competent to officiate as Hazan and Preacher, at a fixed salary of $1,500 per annum and perquisites. An additional income may be expected by teaching a Hebrew school.

Applicants, stating qualifications, should address either

LEWIS LEVY, President,
WILLIAM M. JACOBS, Secretary

WANTED

By the Hebrew Congregation Amunath Abothenu, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, a competent man to act as Chasan, Shochet, Mohel, and Teacher in German and Hebrew. Salary, $600 and perquisites. Applicants will please address at once the under-signed. None but those fully competent need apply. References required.

L. FALK, Secretary

WANTED

At St. Paul, Minnesota, a competent person to act as Teacher and Shochet. Salary, about $700 per annum. Applicants address

I. MENDELSON,
St. Paul, Minnesota
**WANTED**

By the congregation Shaaray Shamayim of Mobile, Ala., a Rabbi and Lecturer, competent to preach in the German and English languages, and superintend a Hebrew School. None need to apply but those fully qualified, and with the best of references as to character and abilities. Salary $4000 and perquisites. Applicants will address

S. RICHARD, Chairman,  
Mobile, Ala.

A Hebrew Teacher, officiating at the same time as Chasan and Shochet, for the Kahal in Montgomery, Ala., on the 1st of August. Salary per annum, $2000 to $2500. Communications will be received by the undersigned, and the necessary information and all particulars given. Single men preferred.

H. WEIL, President,  
Montgomery, Ala.


43. Occident 24, p. 200.

44. Ibid. 2, pp. 320–321.


Isaac Leeser


Jewish Association of United Brethren at Temple Dedication. Sag Harbor, 1900.

(Courtesy of Helen Gerard)
Yankees in Yarmulkes:
Small-Town Jewish Life in Eastern
Long Island

Helene Gerard

Written history, until recently, concerned itself not with ordinary people or events but with the country's leaders and their major political and economic decisions; interpretation of American history was made in major, sweeping concepts which often proved to be myths. Although America was always a land of immigrants, one such myth maintained an idealized homogeneity of "the American people," which reached its zenith at the turn of the century, as Europe's huddled masses, reaching these shores, ostensibly emerged from the melting pot boiled down into amorphous "Americans." This led to group stereotyping from which even the upper echelons of society did not escape, as indicated by the phrase coined by Ward McAllister in 1883, "the Four Hundred." That group was to be admired in awe and even emulated; others, such as "Radicals," were to be thrown out of the country, while "Papists" were to be feared. Jewish immigrants were seen as an urban, mercantile people, noted, even by sympathizers, for their "headlong hunt for wealth," living only in such self-created ghettos as New York's Lower East Side, Boston's North End, or Chicago's Maxwell Street.

Today's social history encourages a different approach, emphasizing the individual and his daily, social, cultural, and religious life, all of which provide the underpinnings for yesterday's facts and figures. Such an approach finds Jews who settled outside the cities in the tobacco country of Virginia and the mining towns of Colorado. They were cattle dealers in upstate New York or piloting ships for the Revenue Cutter Service along the Gulf Coast, doing all manner of things beside shopkeeping, but shopkeeping as well, and surviving as Jews.

This study is based on more than one hundred oral history interviews documented with other available materials. The interviews were done in sixteen villages on eastern Long Island, including fishing
Zelig Kaplan and family, Greenport, c. 1905

Sam Harding at the opening of his second store. Riverhead, 1926.
and farming villages, factory towns, and commercial centers. It was thus possible to investigate many different types of communities which might be considered prototypes of similar villages throughout the country. The stories told and information gathered repeat, with variations on a theme, the experiences of those turn-of-the-century Jewish pioneers who chose to settle as individuals in areas which, even today, are not cities but have had Jews living there for one hundred years and more.11

Eastern Long Island was settled in 1640 by Englishmen who sailed from New England. Within the next 130 years, according to the dean of American Jewish studies, Jacob Rader Marcus, Long Island became "familiar country to New York colonial Jewry."12 However, these earliest Jews left no permanent imprint.

For two hundred years after it was settled the area remained rural, with an economy based on agriculture and the water, separated from New York City by life-style as much as by the 120-plus actual miles.13 In the mid-nineteenth century, descendants of the original New England Yankees showed their prize produce at the County Fair held in Riverhead, the county seat, and the Grange promoted new farming methods of fertilizing and crop rotation.14 Commercial fishing was an important occupation, and the shipbuilding industries of Setauket, Stony Brook, and Port Jefferson "made the names of the villages by-words in ports around the earth."15 With the whaling era past, the deep-harbor ports of Sag Harbor and Greenport were now convenient stopovers for commerce traveling between Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston.

The Jewish Community of Breslau

Between 1840 and 1870, German Jews arriving in America peddled their way out to bustling Long Island villages where some chose to settle.16 Jewish families such as the Fishels in Riverhead and the Jaegers and Markels in Greenport arrived and still remain, but such families left no permanent Jewish mark, for they soon assimilated, usually through intermarriage.

However, by the 1870's, the German migration indirectly provided the location for a lasting Jewish settlement. The combination of a new railroad line and a German immigrant named Charles S. Schleier, who "had a great dream" of creating a place where other German immi-
grants could settle, as the impetus for the village of Breslau, formally dedicated on Pfingst Monday, June 1, 1870. It was in this same village, later named Lindenhurst, that ten men met at the home of Herman Rosenstein on November 23, 1874, to organize a Hebrew congregation called Neta Zarakh [Planting of Thy Seed], incorporated on January 19, 1875. This was the first time that Jews, as Jews, struck roots in the fertile soil of Suffolk County.

By October 1876, the group had purchased a section of land from the Breslau Cemetery Association for a Jewish cemetery. In 1887, ten men met again, this time to form a Hebrew Cemetery Association, with the name Jacob Rosenberg repeated from the original group indicating that there was an ongoing Jewish settlement in Breslau after 1874.

Breslau provided a kosher oasis for Jewish peddlers who found their way that far out on Long Island. It was in Breslau that Robert Blumberg’s grandfather, M. Friedman (named in the 1887 group), had a large house. According to Blumberg, “If they were religious and they landed, they came to my grandmother Friedman’s house. She would put them up, keep them there, feed them.” Blumberg goes on to explain that his father, a peddler, had come out to Breslau by train to do business in the surrounding villages. “So long as my father was religious, my grandmother made the shituch with her daughter right there and then. He married my mother about 1890.”

Perhaps because of its permanence, Breslau was always considered “a large community of Jews,” though the numbers were never too large before 1912. The synagogue was not built until 1915, yet for years before that the community was the religious nucleus for isolated families in the surrounding villages of Babylon, Bay Shore, and Amityville. Belle Cedar Bernstein, now of Center Moriches, remembers: “As a little girl, five or six years old, on the Jewish holidays we walked from Amityville to Breslau. There were quite a few—well, I won’t say quite a few. There may have been six to twelve Jewish families in Breslau then.”

Jewish Peddlers Open Up the East End

After the 1880’s, Breslau continued to be an important Jewish community when enormous waves of Eastern European immigration
reached America's shores. As with the Germans, although most of the Eastern Jews settled in urban centers, some took to the roads leading to the rural villages of eastern Long Island. For them, Breslau was a jumping-off point.

Sam Golden of Setauket tells of his father, thirteen-year-old Isaac, walking with a peddler's pack on his back from Jamaica to Setauket, approximately forty miles. On his way east, Isaac would stop in Breslau for a last hot, kosher meal, after which he subsisted on the hard-boiled eggs and cheese his mother had sent with him. This was a weekly round-trip walk for Isaac; he had to be back in New York with his family every Sabbath. His brother David started the route with him but had to stop; "He was too frail."\textsuperscript{13}

Peddling was an incredibly demanding occupation. The pack itself has been described as enormous; it could have weighed close to two hundred pounds. Reaching above a man's head by at least a foot, on either side beyond his body to the same extent, and down to the tops of his thighs, it was two or more feet deep, made of striped mattress ticking, and filled with small, soft, unbreakable items—ribbons, shoe-laces, needles, pins, and the like. Sometimes larger items, such as underwear, gloves, or yard goods, were carried, depending on how much profit could be realized. It could take hours to unpack, have a farmer's or bayman's wife sort through to choose her purchases, then repack. Then the peddler would stand the pack against a wall, back up to it, crouch down to fit his arms through the straps, pick it up, and walk off to his next stop. Often, he also carried two suitcases, one in each hand for balance.\textsuperscript{24}

Peddlers walked from house to distant house, sometimes along roads, sometimes following the railroad tracks, in all kinds of weather. Miriam Glickman tells of her father, who, after some years, was able to afford a horse and wagon: "He went from Port Jefferson to Hauppauge, about fifteen miles. In those days Hauppauge was a mudhole. I remember he used to say the horse would put one foot in and the foot would get stuck. Or you'd get one wheel out and the other wheel would get stuck. It used to take him a week sometimes to go across."\textsuperscript{25}

Youngsters as well as men in their twenties and thirties walked the hundreds of miles. Oscar Goldin's father, Nathan, was thirteen when the Blizzard of '88 caught him peddling in Eastport. He was on his way to Sag Harbor and across Shelter Island to Greenport, whence he
would walk back to New York along the North Shore, a total of about 250 miles. Abe Brown's father was sixteen when he peddled by foot out to Greenport and decided to settle there. The area was thriving, and he wanted to raise money quickly to bring his wife and child from Russia.

Harry Spodick, who was born in Sag Harbor in 1893, explains that his parents had come to America about 1880 as newlyweds fleeing Russia. His father Edel's skill as a brushmaker was not marketable in New York City. According to Spodick, a lantsman (a person from his father's village in Lithuania) with whom they were staying in New York, "said to him, 'Look, you got to make a living and you have no other trade. My advice to you is to become a peddler.' " This man helped him buy his small items, put them into two baskets which he carried, "and he picked Long Island as to be the place where he was going to start out peddling. They thought that might be good territory. There were a lot of the farmers out here who didn't have opportunities to get in very often to the stores."

Harry Spodick continued: "So he drifted down Long Island and eventually he landed out here. My father liked it. . . . There were a lot of Lithuanians became farmers in the Hamptons, and lo and behold, he met a few of them that came from . . . where he was born. So they became quite palsy-walsy."

The story was repeated in one form or another, one town and another, for the next thirty years. In eastern Suffolk County, Jewish peddlers made their home bases in Patchogue, Center Moriches, Eastport, East Quogue, Southampton, Sag Harbor, Amagansett, and East Hampton. On the North Shore, they settled in Setauket, Riverhead, and Greenport.

The peddlers suffered not only physical hardships but other difficulties as well. Some farmers welcomed them and their wares, gladly trading overnight space in the barn for a pair of warm gloves; others set their dogs on these strange-looking foreigners who could barely speak English. Local storekeepers encouraged the passage of laws requiring fees for peddlers, in the hope of keeping out competition, and village toughs saw a good target in the peddler, who, although he was strong, couldn't fight back or run away by virtue of his burden.

The fact that most of the early Jewish peddlers were observant created additional problems. Lawrence Goldstein tells the story of his
uncle Levi, who was interrupted in laying tefillin by a farmer who, seeing Levi wrapping things around his head, thought he was about to hang himself.29 This same Uncle Levi was, unwittingly, served shrimp for dinner by Charlotte Warner, a bayman’s wife. According to her, she suddenly “heard this crunching and here he was eating the shells and all. And I said, ‘No, Mr. Levi, you have to take the shells off. Didn’t you never do it?’ And he said, ‘No.’” Apparently she was aware of some rules of kashruth, however, for she continued, “If there was pie on the table, he wouldn’t eat it. He knew it was made with lard, see. He didn’t eat meat. He would just eat eggs and potatoes, sometimes vegetables when I had them from my garden. He was very strict about his eating.”30 Usually carrying their own bread with them, the peddlers subsisted on milk, cheese, and other farm dairy products.

Slowly, a back peddler saved enough money to buy a horse and wagon, keep merchandise in the front room, and then buy a store. A wife, often brought from New York or Brooklyn, would supervise the merchandise as well as the home and children, while her husband still took to the road, peddling.

Factory Workers and Other New Arrivals

The number of Jews who went to eastern Long Island as peddlers was small, but they paved the way for larger numbers who followed soon after to work in the “manufactories” which slowly started to dot the landscape. Although grist mills, fulling mills, and similar operations had been in existence since colonial days, the nineteenth century slowly brought industrialization to the East End. Progress took the form of woolen and cotton mills, large shipyards, brickyards, and comparatively good-sized factories.

In 1878 Robert S. Manning and Edwin and Joseph W. Elberson founded the Long Island Rubber Company of Setauket, raising $138,150 from the sale of stock to local businessmen.31 County records show the incorporation, in 1882, of the Fahys Watch Case Company in Sag Harbor with capital stock of $100,00032 and in 1890 of the American Lace Manufacturing Company in Patchogue with capital stock of $120,000.33 It was basically these three firms which brought large numbers of Jews to East End villages, though other, smaller firms, such as the Bellport Shirt Manufacturing Company34
and the Bellport Cigar Manufacturing Company, contributed to the arrival of Jews in their area.

Factory owners wanted cheap labor; Europe's tired and poor, arriving on America's shores by the thousands each day, needed jobs. Advertisements in the many foreign-language newspapers published in New York City and factory recruiters posted at Ellis Island offered good jobs, living quarters, and clean country air. The immigrants responded.

Some newcomers never even entered New York City but came to eastern Long Island directly from Ellis Island to work in the factories, swelling population figures and radically changing ethnic statistics. In 1902, the *Sag Harbor Express* noted a recent census indicating a total population of 3,438. The article continued: "Our population is cosmopolitan... there are about 650 adults of foreign birth. ... The Hebrew invasion, which is comparatively recent, sums up, men, women and children, about 500."

Some of the "invaders" had arrived from Ellis Island by steamer, to be greeted at the docks by townspeople crying, "Jerusalem is coming! Jerusalem is here!"

In Setauket they got off the train speaking no English but with big tags pinned to their coats saying "Castle Garden." To carriage drivers meeting the train, this indicated that they were to be taken or directed to the boarding house of Elias Golden, father of the young peddler Isaac, who, since the family had moved to Setauket, now worked in Elberson's rubber factory. By 1892, the rubber factory had brought almost one hundred Jewish families to Setauket. They were "so central to production that the Jewish High Holy Days were a time of general shutdown for the Setauket factory."

In Patchogue, Daniel Davidow, a former peddler, had established a grocery store in town near the lace mill. His store was wellknown to both the factory salesmen and the owners, Einstein and Wolf, for all were welcomed to the back room for a cup of tea around the big round oak table. One of Davidow's sons, Isidore, states that through this relationship, "whenever any of these greenhorns, as we called them, came into my father's grocery and wanted a job, I went across the street, went into the office and got them a job at the lace mill."

The Jews who came to eastern Long Island were not only peddlers and factory workers. In Sag Harbor, "Murphy the Jew," a hard-drinking, husky type, was a shoemaker. In Greenport, there were Jewish
fishermen, tailors, scallopers, cattle dealers, and horse dealers. In Patchogue, they followed some of the same occupations. There were also butchers, a saloon keeper, and even a vaudeville actor who claims that his act, which traveled all over the Long Island circuit, "never got the hook." Setauket had its saloon keeper and farmer; in East Quogue there were three Jewish farmers, and in Calverton, another. In Center Moriches, a Jewish man, after "being fooled by everybody that he tried to buy something from," and being helped by a Catholic priest when his children were starving and he needed work, eventually established a duck farm which raised several hundred thousand ducks a year. Other Jewish duck farmers operated in Riverhead. While many Jews were merchants, in general they did whatever there was to be done in order to make a living.

Formal Religious Life

The original Jews followed the religious rituals individually. When ten men settled near enough to worship together, a minyan, or the beginning of a congregation, was formed. As in early Breslau, worship was usually held in a private home with the Torah kept in a front parlor closet and taken out for the occasion. Larger communities were the focal point for holiday as well as weekly Sabbath services, although Jews living in outlying areas usually traveled to these centers only on holidays. As Mary Brown Frank remembers it, "Pop would pick up all the men [visiting peddlers]. They left their packs by Momma, in the house. How many peddlers was in the house, he used to take them in his horse and wagon and drive all the way over from our farm in East Quogue to Riverhead. They'd stay there by Mrs. Goldberg... They would go just for yontif, for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur." Formal religious life in the larger communities, of which there were five in eastern Suffolk County, can be traced through incorporation records, land deeds, and newspaper accounts, with details filled in through oral testimony. The three earliest formally established Jewish communities on Long Island's East End were in Setauket, Sag Harbor, and Greenport. Their Jewish residents built the first three synagogues and founded the first two Jewish cemeteries.
When Lazarus Seligson and Louis Rich met at the home of Aaron Grodinski in November of 1893 to incorporate the congregation of Agoodis Achem of Setauket, they stated that they had met as a congregation for the past three years. The previous year George Bayles had sold them about five-eighths of an acre for their use as a cemetery. According to the deed, “the said George P. Bayles doth covenant with the said party . . . That [they] shall quietly enjoy said premises.” This followed the pattern of establishing a cemetery prior to constructing a religious building, for it was not until Saturday, September 12, 1896, that the Riverhead News reported: “A new Jewish synagogue, 24 x 36 feet, has been dedicated at Setauket. The structure cost about $1,500 completed.” It was built by William Deckman, and Sam Golden, Elias’ grandson, recalls that it had an arched entrance with a small water font just inside to rinse the fingers while saying a blessing. On the left were stairs leading up to the women’s balcony, the altar was in the rear, and all of the windows were stained glass.

In 1894, the Hebrew Employees Benevolent Association, Setauket #1, was formed to help the poor and sick. Jews have always been noted for their self-help organizations; this one would seem to have been related to the rubber factory workers.

The Workingman’s Solidarity Society of Setauket, incorporated in 1896, was another such group, concerned with caring for the sick, providing for burial, and further, providing a night school “for the better education of young people of foreign birth whose opportunities for education have been deficient or unimproved and especially that they may the sooner become acquainted with the language, laws, manners and customs of their adopted country and thereby the better qualified for society and citizenship.”

Members of the Solidarity Society were undoubtedly Jewish “socialists,” immigrants who, in Europe or upon coming to America, decided to break with the limitations and restraints of Orthodoxy and Old World Jewry and pursue idealistic goals through worldly, nonreligious means. In the 1880’s and 1890’s, Jewish socialists were more concerned with the “hope of self-transformation . . . than organizing working-class protest.” The Setauket group was probably affiliated with the Workmen’s Circle, created in New York in 1892 to organize
workers and provide them with essential services, such as sick care and burial.

In January 1897, Adolph Cohn, one of its members, conveyed to the Solidarity Society a property of slightly under half an acre that he had recently bought. Adjoining the Agoodis Achem cemetery, this was to be used for the society's cemetery. Other than that, and the fact that it owned a hall between the Methodist church and the synagogue, nothing else is known about the society.

The original rubber factory where most Jews worked was succeeded by several others, each, in turn, succumbing to fire, bankruptcy, or the pressures of the U.S. Rubber trust. Finally, about the time of World War I, the last company sold off its holdings. Long before that, by 1900, most of the religious as well as the nonreligious Jews had left Setauket for lack of employment, and the synagogue had closed.

It was not until after World War II that the Setauket area experienced any sizable return of Jewish families. In 1948, the congregation's name was changed from Agoodis Achem to the North Shore Jewish Center and renovations were started on the old building; by 1970 a large new building was completed to accommodate the families which were members. Incorporated into the building were the stained glass windows from the old synagogue and the two original Torahs were placed in the new ark.

**Sag Harbor**

Further east, in Sag Harbor, Harry Spodick tells of his father, Edel, putting up his gold watch as a deposit to buy land for a Jewish cemetery in 1890. This was undoubtedly after the meeting at the office of Thomas E. Bisgood, on December 15 of that year, when Sami Klein and Nathan Myerson formed the Jewish Cemetery Association of Sag Harbor with six trustees, all of them Russian Jews. This is significant, since from the start in Sag Harbor there were two distinct Jewish communities. The Jews from Russia and those from Hungary brought with them European social antagonisms and refused to worship, socialize, or be buried together.

The Hungarians formed their own Independent Jews Cemetery Association of Sag Harbor in 1899. They bought a half-acre of land for their cemetery, bordered on the west by the Russian Jewish cemetery.
A fence of iron rails was erected between the two which still exists, as do the two cemetery associations.

The Sag Harbor synagogue, financed in part by the famous New York philanthropist Jacob H. Schiff, was dedicated in 1900. According to the Brooklyn Daily Eagle of September 29, 1900, the building was 30 feet by 24 feet, with a basement and a gallery for the women. The article continued: "Long Gothic windows, supplied with stained glass let in abundant light and air. At night, the edifice is illuminated by gas, the Welsbach system being used." Still further: "In the basement has been placed the baptismal font, also bath rooms with hot and cold water, and all the latest sanitary plumbing." Since Jews do not use baptismal fonts, we can assume that the reporter was referring to the mikvah (ritual bath). With seating for one hundred, the synagogue "cost in the neighborhood of $2,500." It was the synagogue of the Jewish Association of United Brethren of Sag Harbor, which had a membership of thirty-six persons, all of Russian origin.

In the same article, the Eagle notes, "Another Hebrew society, apart from the United Brethren, also exists . . . known as the Independent Jewish Association, and is largely composed of natives of Hungary. The society has this week had the renting of Engraver's Hall . . . for their celebration of Rosh Hashanah."

The article gives an interesting picture of the position of Jews in the community in 1900, two years prior to the local newspaper census report of five hundred Jewish men, women, and children "invading" the village. "Twenty years ago it would have been difficult to find a representative of the Hebrew race in Sag Harbor, but the establishment of the Fahys' watchcase factory has brought large numbers . . . . In business the Jews have pushed rapidly to the fore . . . . They control the clothing and fruit trade, and upon the main business thoroughfares fifteen large stores testify to their industry. This does not include the number of wagon and pack pedlars [sic], who work the surrounding country, making this village their headquarters."

In 1918, the Jewish community had financial difficulties and the synagogue mortgage was foreclosed. Three members of the congregation bought it back at public auction for $1,400, and a legal agreement was made stipulating that the temple would never take another mortgage on its property. On May 2, 1918, a new certificate of incorporation was filed. From the names listed, it is clear that by then the Rus-
Yankees in Yarmulkes

sian and Hungarian factions had finally made peace and joined in one congregation. On December 8, 1920, the Sag Harbor Express reported a celebration for the burning of the mortgage.

The 1920's brought hard times to Sag Harbor and to its Jewish community. A new manufacturing firm, the Alvin Silver Ware Company, which was controlled by Fahys, had come to the village in 1921 and also had many Jewish employees, including many salesmen. In 1925, a tremendous fire consumed the factory and an important part of the business section of the village. According to the Express, "The losses occasioned by the fire for the entire block that New Year's morning were estimated as of $750,000."

The factories, badly damaged physically and financially by the fire, were finished off by the Depression. By 1931 they were closed, though a watchman remained on the Fahys premises until 1937 when Bulova took a ten-year lease on the building prior to buying it. Most of the Jews had already left the village. Sherley Ballen Katz remembers being the only Jew in her class when she was in high school during the depression years. Yet enough families remained to maintain the synagogue. Thus, although the Sag Harbor synagogue was not the first to be built, it is the earliest synagogue building still in continuous use.

Greenport

Greenport is the only community where any background can be found as to the internal workings of the early congregations. There, a Minute Book was unearthed, written in Yiddish and dating from October 5, 1902, the "First Men's Meeting." At that meeting, it was decided to name the synagogue [Anshe] Tifereth Israel and to charge $6 dues a year per family, "Either to pay 25 cents a month or every three months." The chevra, or congregation, had been meeting for many years; it was decided at this point to build a synagogue.

On October 19, at the "2nd Regular Mitting" (sic; written in English, as were all proper names in the original book), the committee went to a lawyer with the charter, which had cost $11, and decided to "buy a lot for benefit of Congregation 50 x 150 for $200. All members will contribute to buy lot." Donations of $5 and $10 are noted. By November the "committee reported that a lot could be purchased from Mr. Welsh [Wells] for $300"; a deposit of $50 was given in De-
December, and the fundraising began in earnest. Committees were sent to Riverhead and Sag Harbor, and another covered the village of Greenport itself, while the building committee “reported that Welsh wants $1,350 to build and Stirling Corwin wants $1,100. . . . It was decided to try a third carpenter. Perhaps it will be cheaper.” Mr. Corwin got the job “for $1,130.” Mr. Sandman gave a mortgage for $1,000, and three men, Ben Ballen, Selig Kaplan, and Sam Levine, signed a note for the balance of $130. The cornerstone was laid on July 4, 1904. It is interesting to note that the Kaplan and Levine families are still actively involved with the Greenport Jewish community, while the Ballen family lives in a village of western Long Island where they are actively involved with the local synagogue.

Collection—and noncollection—of funds figures prominently in the minutes of the Greenport congregation. Beside the dues, there are initiation fees, fees for “outsiders,” fees for using the ritual bath and for using the ritual slaughterer. All are debated, noted, written in or complained about at every meeting, where each “50 cent piece” is crucial to the survival of the synagogue. In 1912, a donation of $250 is recorded from Jacob H. Schiff, the same New York philanthropist who made a contribution to the building of the Sag Harbor synagogue. There are no details as to whether it was solicited in the city or made, perhaps, after a visit by Schiff to Greenport, where the wealthy often visited on their yachts in the summertime.

The mortgage was in trouble by 1913 and there was considerable scrambling around for funds. The Minute Books—or perhaps the available translation of them—are unclear as to the details, although there is mention of an application to the Southold Bank for funds. There is also a sheet of stationery from “N. Goldin’s ‘Style Shop,’ ” stating, “What will you donate to help raise the remaining $225.00 to pay off the mortgage [sic]” followed by a list of names and amounts ranging $1 to $50 (from the Hebrew Ladies Aid Society). Most of the pledges are between $5 and $10; all of them are marked “Paid.” This fundraising would appear to have taken place in December 1914.

There was never a foreclosure, and the little synagogue is still functioning as a synagogue. Attempts at getting and keeping a rabbi who will also teach the children are as difficult today as the Minute Book shows they were in the early part of the century, for basically the same reason: it is hard for a small congregation to retain a full-time Jewish
Yankees in Yarmulkes

leader in an area where there is so little else that is Jewish beyond the synagogue itself.

The Jews of Greenport never started their own Jewish cemetery; they used the cemetery in Sag Harbor.

Bellport

During this period, one other community came into existence, but for some reason its development soon stopped. Since there are no remaining local members, information can be gathered only from documents and from recent correspondence. In 1890 the New York and Brooklyn Suburban Investment Company of New York incorporated in Suffolk County. The year before it had purchased a great deal of property from George E. Hagerman, one of its trustees. This land was located in what was to become known as Hagerman, an area overlapping East Patchogue and western Bellport. In 1891, three factories were incorporated in Bellport, although Lain's Brooklyn and Long Island Business Directory 1892 lists only two. Also in 1891 and for several years thereafter, literally hundreds of lots, 100 by 25 feet, were sold for $75 to people with Jewish surnames. By November 1892, a group of men met and agreed to incorporate as Agidath Achim Anshe Bellport, or the Society of Residents of Bellport, “to worship in the Hebrew faith, according to the Ancient Orthodox Hebrew Rituals, and to own lands or cemeteries for the burial of the dead.” Several of these men, newly elected officers of this incipient congregation, had bought land in Hagerman in 1891.

Beyond that, very little is known. Although a letter from the local historical society disclaims “any Jewish families with names you have listed [from the incorporation papers] ever in Bellport,” the LeBlang family, one of the congregation’s founders, remembers that their grandfather had a farm and poolhall in Bellport within their memory. What happened to the rest of the families, how many of the hundreds whose names are listed as grantees in the County Records ever finished the payments on their land in the county, how many actually moved to Bellport, and how and why they moved away are all matters of conjecture.

There is one other recorded Jewish presence in Bellport before the twentieth century. In 1874, the Bay House was built as a large tourist
boarding house/hotel. Apparently, it was quite glamorous and successful, being visited even by the famous "Diamond Jim" Brady. By 1894, the billiard rooms and bowling alley had faded, and it was bought at a foreclosure sale. Five years later, the Jewish Working Girls' Vacation Society of New York purchased it and used it for many years. It is not known whether they chose to come to Bellport because some Jews already lived there or just because it was a resort community easily accessible to New York City by train.

Patchogue

The community in nearby Patchogue was the fourth permanent congregation to be formally established. In 1904, the "Patchogue Hebrew Congregational Church" was incorporated by the group which met "at the rooms of Isaac Manus its usual place of worship." Land was purchased and a synagogue built, with a mortgage of $1,000. In 1929, an adjacent piece of property was bought and a new, larger synagogue built, prior to tearing down the small one. In 1931, the lieutenant-governor of New York, Herbert H. Lehman, attended the dedication of the new building; an old photograph shows him seated with twenty men and one woman in a large room with a floral carpet and curtains and tables covered with refreshments.

There is some confusion concerning the land acquired for the Patchogue cemetery. Oral testimony from several sources states that the land was given to the grocer Daniel Davidow in payment for overdue debts, and Davidow then gave it to the burial society. That would corroborate the custom of establishing a cemetery very early in a congregation's existence as well as the fact that several gravestones predate the incorporation of the Patchogue Hebrew Cemetery Association in 1911. However, recorded deeds show land purchased in 1906 by Aschiel Shapiro, a good friend of Davidow's, and sold to the Cemetery Association in 1911, "on the express condition and understanding that all Hebrews now or hereafter residing in the village of Patchogue shall have the privilege of being buried in said premises free of charge." Undoubtedly, both events occurred, but the details of the informal Davidow arrangement are unknown. The iron gates, brought to Patchogue by the Long Island Railroad and set up by David Greenfield and other community members, still guard the cemetery.
In Riverhead, the Jewish community met at first in private homes for the Sabbath, renting a hall when the High Holidays brought Jews in larger numbers from the surrounding areas. The group was not incorporated until 1911; the synagogue was built in 1924. At that time, a committee went to the Sag Harbor synagogue, which was refurbishing, and bought its benches. According to local legend, one member of the Riverhead community was opposed to this purchase, perhaps because he was not on the committee, and so brought a chair from home, placing it in a position of honor on the eastern wall, and there he sat.

The small synagogue served the congregation of Riverhead until 1947 when a newly constructed building was opened a few streets away. The old building was sold to Samuel Harding, a founder of the original community, and his sons; the family cemented up the large, arched windows and used the building as their furniture warehouse, a function it still serves.

In 1936, the Riverhead congregation purchased the Jewish cemetery from A goodis Achem of Setauket, having located three remaining members of that once large congregation. In 1937, a member of the Riverhead congregation, Samuel (Shmuel) Sackstein, fenced in the cemetery, including the part which had once belonged to the Solidarity Society, of which no members remained. Thus, both sections became the property of the Riverhead community by virtue of adverse possession.

Patchogue and Riverhead complete the picture of the earliest communities of any size on eastern Long Island where institutional development took place. The five villages described were the nucleus for Jews seeking any sort of religious life. However, for the early settlers, religious life certainly was not all.

**The Hardships of Rural Life**

Daily life, for the twenty years before and after the turn of the century, was filled with poverty, hardship, and struggle, which, while it slowly improved, was typical of country living during that period. East-west roads on the Island existed from colonial days; on the East End, north and south roads were more like paths, used for hunting, carrying pre-
pared charcoal from the pits or cordwood from the woods, and getting to the water, which was the main transportation route. The Long Island Railroad reached Greenport in 1844. It moved out along the South Shore more slowly, reaching Sag Harbor by May 1870 and Montauk in 1895. Thus travel was certainly possible, but it was uncomfortable, time-consuming, or costly.

Bicycles were used extensively as transportation after 1880. A neighbor of one Jewish family recalls that the peddler grandfather was constantly in trouble with the railroad conductors; by having to get both his pack and his bicycle on and off when traveling to a distant village, he often made the train late. Another woman remembers hearing that her father and his uncle strapped washtubs on their backs for delivery by bicycle across the iced-over bay between Greenport and Shelter Island. “Deliveries were obviously a difficult thing. They couldn’t afford to hire horses and carts so they did what they could. . . . They could use a bicycle and travelled very quickly.”

About 1900, an occasional car was seen; in 1908 the roads were oiled, and by 1915 there were concrete roads between Moriches and Southampton. Peddlers who had slowly graduated to a horse and wagon were now able to sell from a car or a small truck, traveling farther and still being able to come home at night. Very often, sales were on credit; a dollar down, a dollar a week—or a month.

Kerosene lamps were used after 1850, gas lighting didn’t arrive until fifty years later and electricity for ten or more years after that. In Eastport, the first night the electricity was turned on in Harry Goldstein’s store neighbors came running, thinking the building was on fire. Telephone communication also became possible about 1910, if a family could afford it.

Women’s Work Was Never Done

In this agricultural area, food and animals were home-grown; fish were available from the many surrounding and inland waters. Cooking and baking were done on a wood or coal stove, and canning and preserving food for winter were typical household chores. Many are the memories of the wonderful foods prepared in those years, but nostalgic smiles and sighs are always followed by, “But oy, it was hard work. My mother worked so hard.”
Mrs. Sarah Spodick Epstein of Sag Harbor tells of her mother’s weekly baking: “Flour used to come in big twenty-four and one-half pound bags. We had a great big pan, and on Thursday night we would stand and knead that dough. Poppa used to read the paper. Sometimes I would help Momma. And I would say, ‘Am I finished?’ Poppa would look over his glasses. ‘Nuch a bissel,’ ‘a little more.’ I’d pound at that bread. ‘Nuch a bissel.’ It was hard. In the morning, she’d get up. She’d roll out that dough and bake that bread. She’d braid her bread, fold it, and make challehs. . . . Then she’d make kuchens. Then she’d make ruggelech. And bagel. . . . She’d make sour bread, too, pumpernickel. You could smell her cooking all the way up Glover Street.”

Sewing, too, was typical; store-bought clothing for large families was an extravagance few could afford. Mrs. Epstein remembers, “My mother used to have one kid by her side, one in the belly, and one by the hand, and she went down to sew. She made all the clothes.”

For many women, childbearing, cooking, baking, cleaning, and sewing were only part of their responsibilities. Beyond that, they often had to run a store, help tend the animals, and maintain a boarding house. Mary Brown Frank, in talking about her childhood on the farm in East Quogue, says, “My mother opened up the house to all the Jewish peddlers. She had them from all over. . . . My mother kept a kosher house and she made some beautiful things. . . . And the peddlers would come in, sit around the table and help themselves. There was always plenty of fruit, plenty of food to eat.” And plenty of work.

Medical care was extremely unsophisticated. In Sag Harbor, a young boy was treated for pneumonia by having his body coated heavily with chicken fat; in Patchogue, a prominent surgeon recalls the same illness being treated by having “someone come in and put on theunken, the cups,” and in Setauket, “the medication used for the flu was a certain amount of whiskey.” A characteristic description of a doctor states: “Dr. Russell was an exceptionally good doctor. He used to ride a bicycle to make his calls. From a bicycle he went to a motorcycle and from a motorcycle to a car. His charges were fifty cents to call at your home. If you had the fifty cents, all well and good, and if you didn’t it was just as well. He was that kind of man. He had a little satchel almost like an attache case, and it held vials or test tubes filled with different kinds of pills. And they’d give you the pills right out of there.”
Less pleasant is this memory: "There were no hospitals then. Everybody was born at home. My mother was a torn wreck down there. My mother had ten children but there were seven of us alive. The others died as children from various childhood diseases. . . . My mother was bucked by a cow and had half of her breast ripped off. My mother did her own washing, and when picking up that great big boiler it fell on her. After that cow bucked her, she had this breast burned with hot water. It was a terrible life for her, but we didn’t know it then."

Women had other problems as well, for it was their responsibility to maintain a Jewish home, with all that meant in terms of rites, rituals, holidays, and children. Foods had to be prepared in a certain way, and meat and chicken couldn’t be used unless they were killed by a shochet (ritual slaughterer). Often that entailed traveling many miles by bicycle or horse and wagon to another town to have it done, or doing without. Extra work and preparation went into creating holiday foods, and Passover posed its own problems, as matzos had to be brought from New York and everything else had to be made at home. Jewish education for the children was a mother’s concern, too, and often it was almost impossible. Trained teachers could not be induced to stay too long in these communities which were isolated from the Jewish mainstream.

Social Relations

Isolation was a major factor in women’s lives. Usually coming from New York’s Lower East Side where they had family and friends and a myriad of possible activities ranging from the Yiddish theater to free lectures at the Educational Alliance, young brides were abruptly thrust into a different world. In the rural areas, if an immigrant woman could speak Polish or Lithuanian, she might be able to communicate with a few of her neighbors who couldn’t speak English either, but they rarely socialized together. For one thing, farm women had little time for a social life; for another, most rural activities centered around the church.

In the villages, language was only one of several barriers. Not only could a non-English-speaking woman not talk to her Christian neighbors, but there were lines drawn within the small Jewish communities themselves. In Patchogue the division was between the English-speak-
ing women and those who spoke only Yiddish, in Sag Harbor there was little or no communication between Hungarians and Russians, and in Setauket observant and nonobservant Jewish women didn't mingle.

Nevertheless, it was still more sociable in a town than on a farm. There were more Jews to be among and the early synagogues provided a focal point for activities. Women formed organizations, such as the Daughters of Israel Aid Society, the Daughters of Jacob Aid Society, or the Hebrew Mutual Aid Society, with the purpose of distributing food packages or making small loans to help the needy among those even newer than they. On an informal basis, the ladies met for daily coffee klatches, and entire families would gather on Saturday nights for a weekly poker or pinochle game. Family picnics on Sunday and the celebration of Jewish holidays rounded out the social scene.

The aloneness and hardships of rural life and the limitations of being several tiny communities within a small, non-Jewish community created a situation most women did not enjoy. Some adapted better than others; most did not like living in the country.

However, European Jews, coming from lands where they were openly harassed and killed, felt the freedoms of America very deeply, and framed citizenship papers proudly occupied a prominent position on many a living room table or wall. Here they could worship God as they pleased, sleep peacefully in their beds at night, and have the opportunity to succeed. America was the new promised land. But it was not their America, and in these Yankee towns, acceptance came slowly to men, women, and children alike.

For the men, it came through business. Being in daily contact with the people of the community took some of the edge off their “differ-entness.” These men were outspoken in their love for America and their attachment to the little villages where they had settled. Bessie Frank recalls a nephew taking her father for a ride to the ocean. “And Pop gets out of the car and he was looking at the ocean. He had such a good look on his face and he says, ‘There isn’t any place in this world like Southampton.’ So my nephew says to him very innocently, ‘Grandpa, have you been anyplace else?’ ‘That makes no difference!’ There was no town in the United States that was as good or as nice as Southampton.”

Few women got too involved in village activities. They were not
asked to be members of the Ladies Village Improvement Society, nor were they accepted into the local Eastern Star. If they worked in the family store, they became well known, for, after quickly learning English, it was usually they who waited on customers and allowed charge accounts. The women who stayed at home extended themselves on a one-to-one basis, donating to local charities, sewing for the parent of a child’s friend, or taking some food to a sick neighbor down the street.

Prejudice and Acceptance

Childhood memories vary, but they all include the hurts and wounds of anti-Semitism as practiced by children against other children. Not being invited to parties, not being invited to dances, being chased home from school and called names are consistently repeated stories. But there were fun times, too, and some friendships were formed in school years that exist to this day. As a member of one of three Jewish families in East Quogue, Julius Sachs, born in 1900, recalls: “I don’t think that we had too many problems because we were Jewish for the simple reason . . . we played a lot of basketball. We played a lot of baseball, and we had a lot of friends. . . . Oh, we had a few fights once in a while. If they wanted to call you ‘Jew, Sheenie,’ well, you had to fight. We wouldn’t take it. We were pretty tough kids. But I had friends. I had Jewish friends. I had friends who were Gentiles, too.”

Jewish immigrants slowly demonstrated to the descendants of the original Yankee settlers that they, too, were fiercely independent, industrious, thrifty, God-fearing, and good businessmen. At the same time, they shared with their Irish, Italian, Polish, and Lithuanian immigrant neighbors a poignant awareness of all that had been left behind—traditions, culture, family and friends, as well as troubles—and a desire to become an integral part of their new country. These factors all came into play as the Jews settled into the villages of eastern Long Island.

Economically, culturally, and eventually socially, the Jews contributed to the growth of the entire area. They extended credit to other immigrants, to Indians, and to blacks when others wouldn’t; they invested in real estate; they founded banks, fire departments, and local water companies as well as concert associations. They survived the scourge of the Ku Klux Klan, which paraded down Main Streets,
burned crosses, and withheld employment very openly in every village in the 1920's. By the 1930's and 1940's, Jews were able to become school board members, village fathers, and even mayors. The American dream started to come true.

The Advantages of Village Life

This success story, while it parallels similar stories of smalltown Jews throughout the country, differs in many ways from the patterns of life established by turn-of-the-century first-generation Jews in the cities. Although the centrality of religion in European Jewish communities had started to shift, the law had, for centuries, provided a code of behavior and values which guided and governed people's lives. For Jews arriving in American cities from Eastern Europe, a framework for observance was in place in the form of synagogues, shochets, and large numbers of like-minded people. However, bosses were not necessarily like-minded, and having to work on Saturday was the rule rather than the exception. Religion was no longer the pivotal point in a society where so many other ideas, possibilities, and necessities claimed people's attention and strength. A man could more easily work for himself in the country and thus remain observant. "My father wouldn't work Friday night or Saturday for a million dollars"; "My father could have been a very wealthy man if he'd given up on his religion to the extent of opening the store before 9 o'clock on Saturday night when they got paid in the factory across the street at 5." These and similar words were repeated time and time again.

In the country, staying kosher, observing rituals and holidays, passing the tradition along were all difficult but considered extremely important by parents and an accepted part of children's lives. Being Jewish did not seem to present the obstacles to becoming "Americanized" that it did for many in the cities. Religion helped hold small-town Jews together, and perhaps because it was so difficult to sustain, it was firmly established. Without all the auxiliary supports available in the city, a small-town "observant" Jew undoubtedly differed from his urban brother. Nevertheless, he not only existed as Jew but maintained his Jewish identity in an environment where, for lack of these supports, the ease of and preference for doing so were challenged every day.
A strong sense of Jewish identification came not only from within but from outside. Judge Abraham Frank, who grew up in Southampton, recalls: "If, in school, we were discussing history involving Jews, you felt all eyes were upon you. After all, I was the only Jewish boy in high school for most of my high school career. I carried on my shoulders the full burden and the glory of Jews everywhere. The good Jews added to my glory and the bad Jews made me ashamed. I had to carry this burden, as all of us did."94

The Jewish Family

Family life, too, changed in the move from Europe to America and then further differed between city and country life. In Europe, respect was accorded the father, to whom the family turned for leadership, guidance, and sage advice. He was the authority. In America's crowded urban centers, revered fathers became pants pressers or cigar rollers, without status, downtrodden, exhausted from working eighteen hours a day. Often the rest of the family worked in sweatshops or factories in order to survive. As internal family hierarchy and roles changed, family structure disintegrated.95

In a small town the family unit remained very strong. The father was the head of the household and given all the respect due to that position. When mother and children worked, it was within the family's business, which helped to keep hierarchy and roles intact. Even when the mother essentially ran the store, which happened in many cases, or when children grew up to take over the business or farm, Poppa was still "the boss."

The road to success for children was also perceived and pursued differently in urban and rural areas. To one growing up in the seething maelstrom of the new American ghettos, while success in business was certainly an acceptable way out, a college and then professional education represented a guaranteed passport "uptown" with broad implications not only in terms of earning power but also in regard to status.96 Professional education was not so much of a burning goal in village society, where economic success rested in one's own hands and status was more readily achieved by one's proportionate vested interest in the community. Thus, when an immigrant family acquired some property, which most of them did comparatively rapidly, in the form
of a home, a store, a farm, they were already on their way up. A child could as easily be considered a success by taking over or enlarging a family’s property holdings in the town, becoming involved in village organizations, or holding public office as by earning a degree. In fact, there were many who returned to the family business or farm after going to college and even some who obtained professional degrees and then took over the store. Social friendships were based more on who you grew up with than whether you went to school. Of course, having a child with a college education brought yichus (status) to a Jewish family anywhere, but the significance to the one earning it varied according to where one lived. Generally, for children of immigrants in small towns, there were not the same educational pressures as there were in urban areas, or as there would be on their own children later on.

As with urban Jews, wives, children, parents, brothers, and sisters were brought from Europe, but in the country they were more rapidly taught, helped, and set up in business. Lou Harding describes a typical situation: "My mother’s brother took care of my father when he came to America and brought him out to the Island where he already had a department store. . . . They wanted him to go into business for himself so they looked for another town, east."98

The practice of sending relatives and lantsmen to other villages established Jewish networking throughout the area in the early years which remained strong with the passage of time. This was crucial in many regards. It created a milieu in which Jewish families socialized between towns, which, in turn, enabled young people to meet and marry other Jews. Economically, the establishment and success of a new store on Main Street drew others to try the same, and so each tiny Jewish community expanded while keeping its contacts with the others. “Heck,” says Lawrence Goldstein of Eastport, “if I needed a certain model refrigerator for a customer and didn’t have it, I could call Meyer’s over in Riverhead and he’d help me out."99

Networking carried over into religion, as each of the five synagogues called on people from at least a 25-mile radius for support in the form of membership, donations, and participation. As Abe Bernstein of Center Moriches recalls in the year 1930, “We were in one of our [duck] brooder houses and a representative of the Patchogue Jewish Center came and he said, ‘Harry, we’re going to build a new Tem-
ple in Patchogue. What do you think you can give?' Pop says, ' $500.' I looked and I said, 'Dad, where are you going to get $500?' And he said, 'Gut zull helfin [God will provide]!' ”

Upward Mobility

In the cities, there seemed to prevail, perhaps out of necessity, a sense of sacrifice for the future. No matter how hard things were, they became manageable with the thought that the younger generation, the children, would benefit. Parents worked themselves into the ground, and often the children did, too, in the belief that somehow, through the availability of night schools, public schools, lectures, and cultural events—and more sacrifice—life would eventually improve.¹⁰¹

The men who went to the country were not willing to put off the benefits of life in America for their children. They wanted those benefits for themselves, now. They were fiercely independent, unwilling or unable to work for anyone else, mavericks who did not fit the group mold. They were strong, not only physically but psychologically, able to bear the shame and rebuffs of being so completely different from the people they moved among, and clever enough to soon be more like them outwardly while retaining the distinctive difference of being Jewish. They were self-educated, both intellectually and in the ways of American life, unable to turn to the settlement house or public health nurse for advice and assistance, or to such institutions as the Educational Alliance or the Yiddish theater for help in learning the language or for entertainment. They were completely autonomous in a nonsupportive world, and those who remained in that world were successful. Theodore Leavitt described his father's progress in a village: “My father arrived in Riverhead in 1883 with a basket under his arm and he peddled the countryside... Then he owned this building and had one of the first movie theaters. Financially, it was a dismal failure. But he had a clothing store downstairs and he became a fur buyer, dealing in raw furs. Trapping was fairly extensive out here. Muskrat, mink, 'possum, raccoon, fox... and he would buy the pelts. By the '20's he had a Ford and a chauffeur. He liked to drive in style. L'Hommedieu was the chauffeur's name, but my father could never say it. He used to call him 'Yapcha.' 'Yapcha, let's go,' he'd say.”¹⁰² Abe Bernstein talked about his family on the farm: "My parents came to Center Moriches in 1907.
... [The farm] turned out to be a little, old house on twenty acres of rough land, out in the woods three miles from anyplace, with just a narrow path leading to it. ... My father built this street [now called Bernstein Boulevard] with a pickax and a shovel. ... It wasn’t easy in those days to go in business. ... By about 1914, he started raising ducks. It was a hard life, doing everything by hand. ... Eventually, [by the middle ‘40’s] we were raising 175,000 to 200,000 ducks a year.”

**Jewish Long Island in the 1980’s**

Today, together with their Christian neighbors, the Jews of eastern Long Island share the pleasures and problems of American small-town life. They join Rotary Clubs and Garden Clubs, Chambers of Commerce and Friends of the Library. Their children go to local schools, then to college, and many never return except for a holiday visit. Young people seem to lose touch with their religion despite efforts at childhood religious education. Many marry out of their religion; more and more marriages are followed by divorce. Golf, tennis, boating, and skiing are part of the life-style, but so are homosexuality and compulsive gambling, drugs and alcohol, affecting people in their middle years as well as teenagers. Many former distinctions between Jewish and non-Jewish groups are becoming blurred or disappearing altogether.

For Jews who do return to—or never left—the small villages of eastern Suffolk County where their families started life in America, some things have changed, others are modified, while still other basic facts and feelings seem to go on forever.

Jewish immigrants have been replaced by Puerto Ricans and Asians; there is a large new community of Greeks in the Greenport area which is slowly spreading into other villages. And there are, again, some few Russian Jewish immigrants, escaping from new Soviet repressions, filtering individually and in small groups into the villages and countryside, whose impact is yet to be measured.

The five original communities to which immigrant Jews were drawn a century ago have lost their initial attractiveness. The rubber factories of Setauket, which burned down many years ago, were never replaced, the watchcase factory in Sag Harbor is being turned into condominiums, and Greenport today is considered an economically
depressed area. The lace mill in Patchogue functions as a group of small industrial shops, and Riverhead's Main Street has suffered from the growth of nearby shopping malls. Former farmland is now sprouting unusual architectural configurations commissioned by city dwellers for summer houses, and former duck farms along the water are the site of one- and two-acre private homes.

Yet, as ninety-six-old Fannie B. Lipman said in 1977, "The Jews, they tsopel [squirm] for the country."¹⁰⁹ Like those who came before, they want it for themselves and for their children.¹¹⁰ They are drawn by the clean air and small schools, farm stands with fresh produce in the summer, ice skating on the ponds in winter, very little violent crime, no crowds, the opportunity to be your own person, and the strong possibility of making a good living.

Today, Jewish families move to Setauket because of the State University of New York at Stony Brook and its new teaching hospital; the waters and rural beauty of Sag Harbor and Greenport attract numbers of artists and writers. Patchogue is still a commercial center, has a hospital, and is in close proximity to Brookhaven National Laboratory, and Riverhead brings people connected with the County Center and the courts, its hospital, and businessmen participating in its redevelopment.

Blue collar and white, entrepreneurs, corporation executives and professionals, the literati and the artists, the affluent and the lower middle class are all part of eastern Long Island's Jewish ranks.¹¹¹ As active community members, they continue to make economic, political, social, and cultural contributions to their hometowns far beyond their numbers.

Networking among the Jewish communities still exists. Businessmen bring relatives from New York to help in the store before opening their own in a nearby village, and young people from different villages are introduced to other Jewish youngsters, today not so much through families as through temple-affiliated clubs and organizations. Some difficulties of small-town life also still exist. People living in outlying communities like Southold and Remsenburg, Quogue and Aquebogue have to travel ten or twenty miles to the nearest synagogue, and there is no shochet on all of the East End. Anti-Semitism still exists; the increasingly noted occurrences have caused the establishment of a Racial/Religious Incident Section of the Suffolk County Police Department.
Religious options have expanded. The old Sag Harbor synagogue has changed from Orthodox to Reform, and the old Greenport synagogue from Orthodox to Conservative. In addition, other congregations range from a Lubavitch Chasidic group, which started in Stony Brook, combating the Jews for Jesus movement, to a Reform temple in a beautiful former mansion in East Hampton. There are a newly formed Orthodox Young Israel congregation in Patchogue and a Reconstructionist congregation in Smithtown. Jews on the East End can now attend fifteen synagogues where once there were five, and in Suffolk County there are a total of thirty-nine where, a hundred years ago, there was only Breslau, a place for a peddler to get a kosher meal and worship from a Torah kept in the front parlor closet before striking out into the Christian wilderness.

Linda Livni, who spent ten years working for ABC and NBC television in Israel, returned to Greenport five years ago. Samuel Levine, her grandfather, helped establish the synagogue in 1902; her family has been there since the early 1890’s. After an extended search, “My roots are really here,” she says.113 Ronald Lipetz, raised in Southampton, says he “never had any thoughts about practicing elsewhere, none whatsoever.”114 And Lloyd Gerard, who is now in business with his son in the old family store, says, “Occasionally, when I’m in the store by myself ... I actually sense the presence of my father, my grandfather, and my great-great uncle Levi the peddler.”115

Eight percent of the total population of Suffolk County in 1981 was Jewish;116 on the East End it was much less than that.117 Most of these Jews arrived after the 1950’s,118 but the groundwork had been laid for them a hundred years before, by the Kaplans and the Katzis, the Davidows and Dranitzkes, the Goldens and the Goldins.

Only a handful of the current Jewish population are descendants of those earliest permanent Jewish settlers. Yet, among a people known as wanderers, and in America’s generally mobile society, they are unique. It is hard to think of Long Island’s towns without these pioneer Jewish families. As anyone who lives there will tell you without hesitation, “They’ve been here forever.” And among these descendants, there is a tremendous pride in that first immigrant Jewish family member who “chose Long Island as to be his home.”

Helene Gerard, of blessed memory, died February 2, 1986. A librari-
an, she grew up in Patchogue, Long Island. She had just finished a book-length manuscript entitled "My Father Was a Dreamer: An Oral History of Small-Town Jews."

Notes


Yankees in Yarmulkes

13. For a picture of the Jew Joshua Montefiore, who lived in Sag Harbor during this period, see James Truslow Adams, History of the Town of Southampton (East of Canoe Place), (Bridge-hampton, N.Y.: Hampton Press, 1918), p. 155.


20. SCI, Liber 1, p. 257.


32. SCI, Liber 1, p. 94. This factory was to employ between seven and eight hundred people, with an annual payroll of $500,000. George Finckenor, Sag Harbor Historian, to Helene Gerard, July 30, 1979.

33. SCI, Liber 1, p. 393.

34. Ibid., Liber 1, p. 477.

35. Ibid., Liber 1, p. 478.


38. Stern, “Light Manufacturing,” p. 24. Taken from Port Jefferson Echo, September 24, 1893; Port Jefferson Times, November 4, 1893. In 1888, Elberson brought almost 100 families to Setauket (p. 24); that same year the rubber factory employed over 444 workers (p. 26).


40. Len Cohn, personal interview, October 20, 1975.

41. Abe Bernstein, personal interview, October 25, 1975.


43. SCI, Liber 2, p. 337.

44. Suffolk County Deeds, Liber 376, p. 283 (hereafter referred to as SCD).

45. SCI, Liber 2, p. 349.

46. Ibid., Liber 3, p. 22.

47. Howe, World of Our Fathers, p. 102.
48. SCD, Liber 453, p. 503.
50. Spodick, interview.
51. SCI, Liber 1, p. 447.
52. Ibid., Liber 3, p. 150.
54. Congregation Tifereth Israel, *A Record of the Early Years: An "As Is" Translation and Transcription of the Minutes Commencing October 5, 1902 in Commemoration [sic] of the 75th Anniversary* (privately published, n.d.). This and all the following information regarding the Greenport synagogue is taken from the Minute Book.
55. SCI, Liber 2, p. 127.
56. Ibid., Liber 1, pp. 467, 477, 478.
57. See, e.g., SCD, Libers 351 ff.
58. SCI, Liber 2, p. 227.
60. Howard LeBlang, telephone interview, April 12, 1981.
62. SCI, Liber 4, p. 135.
63. SCD, Liber 1433, p. 127.
64. SCD, Liber 1434, p. 15.
66. SCI, Liber 7, p. 353.
67. SCD, Liber 582, p. 186.
68. Ibid., Liber 796, p. 255.
73. Cohn, interview.
75. Goldstein, interview, October 10, 1979.
76. Epstein, interview.
77. Ibid.
78. Mary Brown Frank, interview.
79. Spodick, interview.
80. Dr. Jacob Dranitzke, personal interview, September 24, 1975.
81. Golden, interview.
82. Ibid.
84. SCI, Liber 9, p. 258.
85. Ibid., Liber p. 263.
86. Ibid., Liber 5, p. 160.
87. Gerard, *And We're Still Here*, pp. 27-32.
92. Brown, interview.
99. Goldstein, interview.
100. Abe Bernstein, personal interview, October 25, 1975.
103. Bernstein, interview.
104. In a letter to the *Jewish Week and American Examiner*, April 27, 1984, Dr. George Dubb, head of the Department of Research and Educational Information of the Jewish Educational Service of North America, states that their studies “have found that in small communities in the United States as many as 80 percent of all eligible children are, at one time or another, enrolled in formal Jewish education programs.” See also Paul Ritterbrand and Steven M. Cohen, “The Social Characteristics of the New York Area Jewish Community, 1981,” *American Jewish Year Book 1984* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1983), p. 134.
105. Ritterbrand and Cohen, *American Jewish Year Book 1984*, p. 134, indicate that of the eight counties studied (Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island, Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester), Suffolk has the highest rate of intermarriage (22 percent).
106. Ibid., p. 145, indicates that Suffolk is second only to Manhattan, with a divorce rate of 7 percent.
population of 1,284,200. Stewart Ain, "New Federation Figures No Surprise," Jewish World, August 10–16, 1984, p. 2, states that Percy Abrams, executive director of the United Jewish Ys of Long Island, and Elaine Sommer, casework supervisor of the Jewish Community Services of Long Island's Suffolk Office, both feel that by 1984 that figure was low.

110. Ritterbrand and Cohen, American Jewish Year Book 1984, p. 146, indicate that Suffolk County has the highest percentage of households with children.

111. Ibid., pp. 136–138, 156–158, indicate that 34 percent of male heads of households in Suffolk County work full-time for themselves, 56 percent for others, and that the median income is $35,000, the first quartile $25,000 and the third, $50,000.


117. The figures gathered in The Jewish Population of Greater New York: A Profile (New York: Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, 1984) indicate the difficulty of accuracy in an area where people build second homes for weekend and summer use and where population doubles and even triples between June and September.

118. Ritterbrand and Cohen, American Jewish Year Book 1984, p. 129.
Mordecai Kaplan, The Teachers Institute, and the Foundations of Jewish Education in America

Mel Scult

The success of any educational system is dependent on the orientation, motivation, and training of its teachers, or more succinctly, on their professionalism. This in turn is dependent on the existence of teacher-training institutions guided by a clear view of the goals and purposes to be achieved by education and able to convey an adequate pedagogical methodology for attaining these goals. In the field of Jewish education in the United States, professionalism was virtually nonexistent until early in the twentieth century. Before then, with the sole exception of Gratz College in Philadelphia, which was founded in 1897 but did not even have quarters of its own until nearly a decade later, there were no institutions for the training of Jewish educators in this country.

The situation changed significantly, however, with the establishment of the Teachers Institute at the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1909 and of the New York Bureau of Jewish Education in 1910. The heads of these two institutions, Mordecai Kaplan and Samson Benderly, were to make decisive contributions to the development of professionalism in American Jewish education, not least because each of them had a keen vision of what Jewish education ought to be, based upon an equally keen vision of the essential nature of Judaism. Although Kaplan and Benderly often differed in their views of what was necessary and how to accomplish it—and these differences remain at the heart of many issues in Jewish education to this day—they were united in the belief that education was the key to Jewish survival in America. Their fruitful interrelationship, and the groundwork they laid, resulted in a major renascence of Jewish education in this country and for the first time ensured that the teachers in American Jewish schools would be professionals in the full sense of the word.

Kaplan’s role at the Teachers Institute, moreover, was a major turning point in his life. Returning as a professor and administrator to the
Foundations of Jewish Education

Jewish Theological Seminary, where he had formerly been a student and was ordained in 1902, he ceased to be primarily a pulpit rabbi and became involved in the education of rabbis and teachers and, so as to facilitate his educational work, in the elaboration of his own philosophy. During his years at the Teachers Institute he emerged from relative obscurity to become a significant figure on the Jewish scene in New York City and on the East Coast generally. Kaplan's work at the Seminary and his participation in the work of the Kehillah of New York, which saw the improvement of Jewish education as one of its major responsibilities, put him at the very center of the Jewish community and its problems. What emerged from his multiple involvements was a clearer sense of the direction Jews ought to take in strengthening their community.

The Founding of the Teachers Institute

Mordecai Kaplan was appointed to head the newly founded Teachers Institute by Solomon Schechter, who became the president of the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1902. Schechter had come to New York with high hopes and with a great vision. Under his leadership some outstanding scholars were added to the Seminary's faculty, the library was expanded, public lectures were given, and there was a great sense of movement and creative endeavor. Nonetheless, the Seminary was not without its problems. These included attacks by Orthodox Jewry as well as serious financial difficulties. Another problem was that the Seminary was not doing well with its Teacher's Courses.

The first Teacher's Course at the Seminary was inaugurated in January 1904. Instruction consisted of four class hours a week for three years, after which a diploma was to be issued. Any student fifteen years or older was eligible to attend. Ninety-three people registered for the first term, and in the second term, there were 135, but from then on the number of students steadily decreased. Writing some years later, Kaplan maintained that this was because the location of the Seminary on 123rd Street, so far from New York's Jewish neighborhoods, made it difficult for young people to attend. At one point the Seminary had considered establishing a downtown branch, but this did not work out.

By 1906 Israel Friedlaender, Schechter, Bernard Drachman, and Is-
Samson Benderly (1876-1944)
Israel Davidson were teaching courses in Bible, Hebrew, prayerbook, Jewish history, and the *Ethics of the Fathers*. Registration, however, did not improve. In May 1907, Schechter wrote to Cyrus Adler: "With regard to the Teacher's Course question, I wish only to say that everything at present is against it. The place is not suitable, as the Seminary is too far away from the center of town." At the end of the 1907–8 academic year, Schechter told the Seminary's board that he was going to discontinue the courses for teachers. In addition to the matter of location, Schechter reported the need for additional staff: "I think there is also a great deal of truth in what Dr. Friedlaender says, that such an institution cannot be treated as a mere appendix to another institution whose teachers are already fully occupied."

In November 1908 Schechter appointed a committee to come up with a proposal to solve the question of training teachers. The committee was chaired by Louis Marshall and included Cyrus Adler, among others. It was clear that a new structure of some kind had to be created. As in so many other situations, Jacob Schiff came to the rescue. He offered to set up a fund of $100,000 which was to be called the "Jewish Teachers College Fund." Half the income from this fund was to be used for training teachers "East of the Alleghenies," and the other half, "West of the Alleghenies," i.e., the income would be divided between the Seminary and the Hebrew Union College. Adolf Lewensohn, another strong supporter of the Seminary, also came up with $2,500 a year for five years. The board of the Seminary stipulated that a model school should be established downtown on the Lower East Side.

The first order of business for the Seminary was to select someone to organize the new department. By the beginning of May nothing had been done, and Adler was getting nervous. "If the thing is not done within the next few weeks," he wrote to Marshall, "we will lose a year and we will be in an awkward position, too, if the School in Cincinnati was started and ours was without funds." The first person they considered to head the school under the new plan was Jacob Kohn, a graduate of the Seminary in 1907, who declined to accept the position.

According to Kaplan, it was Henrietta Szold who first brought him to Schechter's attention as a possible head of the new school. In 1902, when Schechter began his tenure at the Seminary, Kaplan and "Miss
Henrietta” got to know each other while taking a course with him. She had just moved across the street from the new Seminary with her mother, and in the course of time she became an important part of the Seminary family. Two faculty members, Friedlaender and Alexander Marx, took English lessons from her, and in addition, she translated numerous articles and speeches for Louis Ginzberg, as well as his monumental six-volume *Legends of the Jews*. As a result, her opinions were respected and her advice often heeded.6

According to Kaplan, Henrietta Szold attended a service at his synagogue, Kehillath Jeshurun, in the spring of 1909. There the women in the congregation told her how well the religious school was run, and she also probably heard him preach. Afterwards she talked about Kaplan with Schechter, who was still looking for someone to head the new Teachers Institute.

In June of the same year Schechter was present when Kaplan gave an address to the Seminary’s alumni association. Kaplan’s speech concentrated on Jewish nationalism as a religious creed. He began by pointing to the new circumstances created by Jewish emancipation and to the fact that neither Reform nor Orthodox Jews had come up with a version of Judaism adequate to the new situation. Zionism, he said, also had its limits, for nationalism as a movement “degenerates into a mere matter of charters and transportation.” He added that only Jewish nationalism considered as a religious creed could save the Jewish people. Such a creed “would read something like the following: 1. that the Jew cannot find the fulfillment of his spiritual nature except through the entire people past and present; 2. that the Jewish people cannot fulfill its spiritual nature except through the physical appurtenances of what is commonly called national life, and to show how it is impossible to have Judaism without these assumptions.” “Doctrine is the response of a collective consciousness of a given age to its experiences,” Kaplan explained, and these experiences have changed very significantly in recent times. Doctrine must, therefore, follow the shift in authority. It is only by faith in the community of Israel that Jews can unite and that Judaism can survive.7

Schechter was very impressed, according to Kaplan.8 After the speech he took Kaplan back to his office and offered him the position as head of the new teachers department. Kaplan was interested, of course, but did not give a definite answer until a few days later.
Schechter, in a letter to Marshall after their meeting, described Kaplan in the following terms: “He is a strong man, his English accent is pure, and he is very greatly interested in pedagogics.” Schiff approved of the choice and agreed to a contract paying $500 more than they had offered Jacob Kohn. Later in June Schechter invited Kaplan to his place in the country. He seemed to be very satisfied with his choice, for he wrote to Adler: “I think we have found the right man. This is also the opinion of Mr. Marshall who knows him [Kaplan] and from whom I heard yesterday.” Schechter also mentioned that Kaplan would take a summer course at Columbia in “pedagogics.”

Kaplan’s Relations with Schechter

Schechter obviously had a high regard for Kaplan, and over the next few years the two men were to have an interesting and complex relationship. They worked closely together in developing the new Teachers Institute, except during 1910–11, when Schechter was abroad on sabbatical, and it is clear that Schechter considered him an outstanding administrator. Schechter also thought well of him as a teacher, appointing him professor of homiletics at the Seminary in 1910 to fill the vacancy left by the death of Joseph Mayer Asher, and he also encouraged Kaplan’s scholarly work, such as his critical edition of Shir HaShirim Rabbah, a classical Hebrew text dealing with the Song of Songs, and his translation and critical edition of The Path of the Upright, an eighteenth-century ethical work, by Moses Hayyim Luzzatto. According to Kaplan, Schechter may have had him in mind as a possible successor, but nonetheless there is little doubt that Schechter was disturbed by Kaplan’s ideas, and especially by his view that religion could only be understood through the social sciences, and particularly sociology. In 1915, for instance, when Kaplan expounded this idea in two articles, “What Judaism Is Not” and “What Is Judaism?” in the newly founded Menorah Journal, Schechter reportedly told him, “I’m going to answer you” (he never did, however, since he died a few weeks later). Kaplan was grateful to Schechter for giving him a start, but he resented Schechter’s critical attitude, and thus in 1933, when Alvin Johnson, the editor of the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, asked him to write a biographical piece of four hundred
words on Schechter, Kaplan refused. His reply is quoted here in full:

I regret I do not see my way clear to writing the article on Schechter because I do not hold the majority opinion about him. I do not question his eminence as a savant and as an outstanding personality. He was a Jewish Samuel Johnson but I cannot act as his Boswell. While I consider his contribution to Jewish scholarship as worthy of the Historical School to which he belonged, I regard his contribution to the problem of Jewish adjustment as more confusing than helpful. He belonged to that school of thought which views life as something self-evident and to be accepted as a God-willed destiny and as bound to become soulless and meaningless as soon as it is treated as a problem. The social sciences were to him the work of the devil, and those who invented the Jewish problem, the devil’s disciples. Since he probably classed me as one of those disciples, although we were always on the friendliest of terms, I feel someone else ought to do his biography."

Kaplan as Principal of the Institute

In the fall of 1909, with Schechter’s full approval and backing, Kaplan began his duties as principal (the title is British) of the Teachers Institute. The new institution was initially called the “Teachers College” of the Jewish Theological Seminary, perhaps indicating that Schechter, with Columbia University’s Teachers College in mind, wanted to build an institution which would be much more than a rabbinical school. When the Teachers College opened, Schechter was very hopeful. In an optimistic mood, he wrote Marshall, “The Seminary with the help of God is destined to become the Jewish University of America.” The beginning, however, was very modest. The Teachers Institute held its first classes in the Uptown Talmud Torah on East 11th Street and later in the Downtown Talmud Torah on East Houston Street. Eventually, however, it moved to larger quarters of its own in the Hebrew Technical Institute at 34 Stuyvesant Street.

Although the Teachers Institute started on a modest scale, it grew quickly. The first class had only sixteen students, but at the beginning of the second year there were sixty-eight, and by 1914, Kaplan was calling for an expanded Teachers Institute, “with its own building and a library of its own. It must have a model school . . . It must possess all those accessories which will make it a power for the rehabilitation of Jewish spiritual life.” By 1918 the Teachers Institute had graduated six classes, granting a total of 114 diplomas. In 1920 Kaplan reported
that there were 157 students, including those in the extension department, and consequently that the quarters at the Hebrew Technical Institute were no longer adequate.\textsuperscript{20}

The Teachers Institute provided instruction in Jewish history, Hebrew, religion, and pedagogics. Kaplan and Friedlaender were the mainstays of the faculty, but others were quickly added. Morris Levine, a graduate of the Seminary, came aboard in 1913, along with Elias Solomon, a former classmate of Kaplan's. Zvi Scharfstein joined the faculty in 1917, as did Leo Honor, and Max Kadushin joined for a short time in 1920. Hillel Bavli, destined to become a noteworthy Hebrew poet, joined in 1922.

\textit{Kaplan's Developing Philosophy}

In his courses at the Teachers Institute, and also in his homiletics courses at the Seminary, Kaplan used the Torah as his chief text. He later explained:

Besides administering the Teachers Institute, I was to give instruction in religion. . . . In the past, the belief that every word in the Pentateuch was divinely dictated was sufficient to make religion an exciting affair for the Jew. With that belief gone, I felt that we had to discover the deep underlying spiritual motives which actuated the final redaction of the Pentateuch. If we could only retrieve these motives, Jews would once again find the Torah inspiring.\textsuperscript{21}

The greatest problem, Kaplan believed, centered around the matter of authority. Biblical criticism seemed to put an end to the Torah as a divinely revealed work and as the preeminently authoritative text that it had been in the past. He wrestled with the question and by June 1912 had evolved the beginning of an answer. Speaking to the Seminary alumni at Tannersville, New York, he confronted the basic issue head on. "Does it necessarily follow that if we accept the method of Criticism, we must surrender the possibility of its [the Torah] being authoritative and eternal? That this is certainly not the case becomes clear when we take note of what is involved in the terms authoritative and eternal." Kaplan went on to explain that the authority of the Torah text does not depend on "whether it is a direct creation of God, but whether we are willing to accept as authoritative that which Israel
has hitherto accepted as such." The Torah is eternal if Jews continue to make it the center of their lives.  

These ideas formed the basis of Kaplan's course in religion at the Teachers Institute, which began with an introductory discussion on method and then concentrated on a detailed interpretation of the Torah, "from the point of view of its bearing on Jewish belief." Kaplan analyzed the threat of science to religion as well as the need to study Judaism with the aid of the social sciences. He stressed the group nature of religion, defining Judaism as "the living consciousness of the Jewish people," and telling his students that "to be a Jew means to feel that you are one of a people and that of a great people." Kaplan did not attempt to sidestep the key theological questions. He did not believe that God was reducible to group life, as some have charged, but rather that "God is only to be felt and realized in the collective life which has the power of its individuals." He might well have quoted the rabbinic dictum which asserted that God is present wherever Jews gather to study Torah. He applied his analysis to specific aspects of Judaism and gave illustrations. "The Sabbath is a day set aside for social union," he said. "On that day does the individual live the life of his whole group. Thus we see that the Sabbath has its roots in nature, its function being to maintain group life."  

**The Teachers Institute in Full Swing**

As mentioned earlier, in 1916 the Teachers Institute finally acquired a permanent home in the building which housed the Hebrew Technical Institute, a vocational high school for boys. The dedication ceremonies were held on April 15, 1916, a Sunday afternoon, with Cyrus Adler, the acting president of the Jewish Theological Seminary, presiding. Jacob Schiff spoke, along with Judah Magnes and, of course, Kaplan. All 145 students were there, and the press reported that they enthusiastically applauded when Kaplan got up to speak. "He dwelt on the 'Jewish will to live' and pointed out how the Institute would endeavor to awaken this 'Jewish will to live' in the hearts of future generations."  

The first classes at the Teachers Institute were apparently given in English. Kaplan observed that "a more Hebraic spirit" was brought in by Morris Levine and that the curriculum was continuously upgraded.
as the quality of the students improved. After the Bureau of Jewish Education, which we shall discuss below, established its own high school, the Teachers Institute was able to revise its admission standards upwards because the applicants were so much better.25

The improvement in the student body led to other changes. In the early years, the Teachers Institute had, in effect, two groups of students. One came through the Talmud Torahs, and the second from the congregational schools. The diplomas of those in the second group used the word “elementary,” implying that they were only entitled to teach beginning courses. By 1920 all of the graduating students had advanced diplomas. In addition, many who had received elementary diplomas were taking postgraduate work in order to be able to teach more advanced courses.26

The New York Kehillah

After 1909 Kaplan’s work in Jewish education was very much tied up with that great experiment in social engineering, the New York Kehillah. In September 1908 New York’s police commissioner, Theodore A. Bingham, wrote an article charging that approximately half of the criminals in New York City were Jews. The Jewish community was up in arms over this slur and reacted strongly. Solomon Schechter, for his part, took the charges seriously. “We may not close our eyes to the evil that is now revealed,” he wrote to Louis Marshall, “the existence of a substantial criminal element among our Jewish population. It is our duty to remove the evil from our midst.” Schechter believed that the increased criminality among young Jews was a reflection of the demoralizing effect of the American environment. Removal from traditional religious life “has had the unfortunate effect of destroying their hereditary virtues, . . . [and] of annulling the sense of authority and of moral responsibility.” In order to remedy this situation, Schechter proposed a new “Peoples Synagogue” downtown and the total reorganization of Jewish education. “There must further be developed a system of religious education with an organized course of instruction; schools that are co-ordinated and supervised by competent authorities. . . . a model school should be organized, with English as the medium of instruction.” He did not say so explicitly, but he obviously assumed that the Seminary would have a hand in these projects.27
The police commissioner's charges stimulated a massive communal response, and in February 1909 a Constituent Assembly was convened at the United Hebrew Charities Building on Second Avenue. In attendance were more than three hundred delegates representing most of the city's Jewish organizations, including "... 74 synagogues, 18 charitable societies, 42 mutual benefit societies, 40 lodges, 12 educational institutions, 9 Zionist societies, 9 federations, and 9 religious societies." Recognizing that New York Jewry needed a central organizational body, the Assembly founded the famed New York Kehillah, also known as the Jewish Community of New York. That spring the Kehillah set up an executive committee of twenty-five, which elected Judah Magnes, a young Reform rabbi, as chairman. The executive committee in turn appointed committees in several areas, such as religious organization, Jewish education, social and philanthropic work, and propaganda. Kaplan, who had attended the Constituent Assembly as the delegate of Congregation Kehillath Jeshurun, was appointed to the education committee, which was headed by Israel Friedlaender and included Rabbi Moses Z. Margolis, Maurice Harris, a Reform rabbi, Henrietta Szold, and Dr. Bernard Cronson, a local public school principal.

The first matter on the education committee's agenda was to gather information regarding Jewish education in New York City. Cronson conducted a survey, which Kaplan presented to the Second Kehillah Convention, held in the large hall of the Charities Building on a Saturday evening in February 1910. There were between five and six hundred organizational delegates present, and the American Hebrew realistically noted that a few of them didn't know what the Kehillah was. But at the same time, many felt they were embarking on a great adventure. Magnes opened the session with a statement of the goal, "... how to form a cohesive, conscious body out of the million Jews in the city without coercion from without and with a large number of Jewish institutions already in existence." After Magnes made some general remarks on the committees and their functions, Mordecai Kaplan, now acting chairman of the education committee, got up to report on the survey. His report described Jewish education in New York, listing the different kinds of Jewish schools and making recommendations for their improvement. Kaplan's report advocated that the Kehillah centralize the Talmud To-
rahs so that adequate facilities could be built and maintained. It also recommended the establishment of a Bureau of Jewish Education. After Kaplan finished speaking, an announcement was made that a “Friend of the Kehillah” had given $10,000 a year for the next five years in support of the Kehillah’s educational arm. The next morning, Magnes announced that the $50,000 would be used for the Bureau of Jewish Education. Arthur Goren, the noted historian of this period, comments that “overnight the study provided benchmarks in an unsurveyed field. Heretofore, problems of religious education belonged to the province of small isolated groups, motivated by personal philanthropy or private gain. The Kehillah, at its 1910 convention, transferred such discussion into the public realm.”

Samson Benderly

As had been the case earlier with the Teachers Institute, it was essential to find the right man to head the new Bureau of Jewish Education. The Kehillah’s choice was Samson Benderly. Born and brought up in Safed, Palestine, Benderly had become a physician but left this profession to run a Jewish school in Baltimore. There he gained renown as a bold experimenter and innovator. He helped raise money so that the school could be moved from its basement quarters to a three-story building. He introduced the \textit{Ivrit be-Ivrit} method (teaching Hebrew in Hebrew), established clubs outside the classroom, worked out programs related to the holidays which included music and dance, established play areas for recreation, and had physical exercises which were conducted in Hebrew. All of these educational techniques are familiar and widely practiced today, but in 1905 they were a rarity.

Benderly’s efforts appropriately received wide publicity in Jewish circles. The leading East European Hebrew monthly, \textit{Hashiloah}, noted: “The educational program of Dr. Benderly is the only answer to Jewish education in America. Benderly has integrated Jewish education into the needs and requirements of the American environment. He has thus shown his pedagogic genius.” Kaplan himself, who found a kindred soul in Benderly after they began working together in New York, wrote of him in 1949: “Having fully absorbed and digested the teachings of Ahad Ha-am and Herbert Spencer, he had become obsessed with the passionate purpose of utilizing education to transform the Jews into a prophetic people.”
The Bureau of Jewish Education, with Benderly at its head, and Israel Friedlaender, Louis Marshall, Henrietta Szold, and Mordecai Kaplan appointed by Magnes as trustees, officially opened its doors in the fall of 1910. Kaplan already knew Benderly, having been sent by Schechter to visit his school in Baltimore soon after he became head of the Teachers Institute. The two men had much in common, and they became friends as well as colleagues. Moreover, they had certain interests in common which made their collaboration a natural one, for as Kaplan later wrote, "He [i.e., Benderly] needed trained people and the Teachers Institute was looking for students to train."36

Benderly had a two-pronged approach in New York City. First, he wanted to work with the leaders of existing Talmud Torahs to help them upgrade their schools and coordinate their curricula. To this end, he organized the Hebrew Principals Association and produced the first standard curriculum for Talmud Torahs. In addition, Benderly continuously pushed for the innovations he had begun in Baltimore, such as the use of Hebrew as a teaching language, the employment of all the arts, and the use of the latest educational technologies (e.g., stereopticon on the Bible).37 Benderly also established a number of schools which the Bureau ran, one at the YMHA on 92nd Street, one in Harlem, a third at the Downtown Talmud Torah on Houston Street, and another in Brownsville.38

Kaplan soon felt the impact of Benderly's work. In his Seminary commencement address in 1914, he noted that "the standard both of admission and of graduation is far higher than what it was when the [Teachers] Institute was first organized. The curriculum has correspondingly been made more inclusive and intensive."39 Some years later he commented that the Hebrew high school established by the Bureau had extended the preparation of entrants to the Teachers Institute by three to four years. "For the first time," Kaplan wrote, "it was possible for the Teachers Institute to draw upon a student body who had received a uniform Jewish training that paralleled their secular high school training."40

The second aspect of Benderly's strategy was to bring new, fresh, young talent into Jewish education. As a matter of fact, it would not be an exaggeration to state that Benderly created the profession of Jewish education in the United States and that Mordecai Kaplan played a major part in this endeavor.
The group of young men that Benderly gathered around him were known as the Benderly Boys. Originally he hoped to seduce young men from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Yeshiva into Jewish education by giving them money to attend a local college. With the secular education at college and later in graduate school, plus additional Jewish education, he would be able to turn out first-class Jewish educators. Alexander Dushkin, one of the first Benderly Boys, a leader in Jewish education in the United States and later in Israel, described the plan: "For us [young men and women] he [Benderly] outlined his three-fold training on the job: (a) To employ us immediately as teachers in the model schools which he planned to establish, and to give us pedagogic supervision and guidance while in service; (b) to enable us to pursue studies in education toward M.A. and Ph.D. degrees at Teachers College, Columbia University; and (c) to arrange special courses in Judaic Studies at the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary.” Benderly succeeded wonderfully, because the collective biography of this group would actually be a history of Jewish education in the United States for the next forty years.41

Kaplan recorded in his journal that initially he had little faith in the scheme. Nonetheless, whenever he encountered capable young men, he recommended them to Benderly. In this way he brought a number of young people into the group, including Alexander Dushkin and Isaac Berkson.42 The group would meet with Benderly in the morning before the college day began for a combination of “ceaseless chatter, delightful epigrams, and stories and practical guidance.” The group’s relationship to Benderly had in it something of the master-disciple relationship. “There was the quality of the Hasidic rebbe in Benderly, and he molded us into a comraderie of believers,” wrote Dushkin in his memoirs. “We considered ourselves a band of pioneers who were ‘hastening the footsteps of the Messiah.’ Benderly was not a religiously observant Jew in the traditional sense . . . but something of the deeply emotional mystical background of Safed permeated him. I remember his singing Hasidic chants,” recorded Dushkin, “with tears streaming down his face.”43

In addition to their “Seminars” with Benderly, the group attended a special class organized by Kaplan. He started to teach them informally
during the spring of 1912. During that summer, Friedlaender taught them Bible and history while Kaplan dealt with the principles of education. In the next few years, Kaplan continued to teach the group, devoting himself to the study of the Bible according to his interpretation as well as the study of Talmud. He derived great satisfaction from teaching them and felt that in many ways they were stronger than his students at the Rabbinical School.44

Kaplan’s Collaboration with Benderly

On the whole, Kaplan found Benderly’s philosophy of education appealing. Benderly believed strongly that Jewish education should be a coordinated community enterprise, not a disorganized morass of private and philanthropic activities. He accepted the fact that American Jewish children would attend public school and worked around that reality in building Jewish institutions. His ideals for Jewish education were expressed in the following terms: “By good Jewish teachers we mean those who, in addition to their intellectual and pedagogic equipment, possess a knowledge of our American Jewish youth, are imbued with Jewish ideals, and know and love the Jewish people, in whose future they believe.” As a follower of Ahad Ha-am, he saw the aim of Jewish education as “the preservation of the Jews as a distinct people, existing and developing in the spirit of the Jewish religion.”45 Nevertheless, as Dushkin put it (and Kaplan agreed), Benderly did have several blind spots: “He failed to see the synagogue as the inevitable unit of American Jewish life, and as growing in educational importance on all age levels. He was opposed to Jewish day schools which aim to teach both Judaic and general studies.” It thus is understandable that “the Conservative rabbis accused him of being a ‘secularist’ and the Reform Jews opposed him as a nationalist.”46

Kaplan continued to teach the Benderly group along with Friedlaender, although occasionally some minor student-teacher problems surfaced. In May 1915, for instance, the group complained about Friedlaender’s teaching of history. Approached by Benderly about the situation, Kaplan invited Friedlaender, Benderly, and the students to his house to discuss the matter. Friedlaender absorbed the brunt of the student dissatisfaction by freely admitting that he was not a specialist in history and therefore could not proceed at a rapid pace.47
Throughout this period Kaplan worked closely with Benderly. Physically their centers of activity were not far from each other. The Bureau was located in the Hebrew Charities Building on Second Avenue and 21st Street, while the Teachers Institute was off Second Avenue near 9th Street. Philosophically Kaplan and Benderly shared a deep dedication to the Jewish people, but they parted on the matter of religion and its function. Kaplan was bothered by Benderly’s neutrality toward religion and believed that his attitude was a reflection of Ahad Ha-am’s thought. In 1914, for instance, he wrote:

I must say that Dr. B. is perhaps the only man who is working out Ahad Ha-amism in Golus [Exile] in a systematic and organized way. I had always missed something in Ahad Ha-am’s conceptions of Judaism, but certainly its realization in practice I have always found jarring to me. It is wanting in appreciation of the indefinable religious longings and aspirations. . . . It is this spirit that has taken possession of the men [under Benderly] and I have found them strange, unresponsive to the deeper appeals of Judaism.

Kaplan regretted the fact that Benderly encouraged his “boys” to go for doctorates in education rather than study for the rabbinate at the Seminary. As Kaplan put it,

. . . he urges them to work for the Doctor’s Degree in Columbia expecting that when one of them will swoop down on an out-of-town Jewish community as Dr. So and So, the Jewish populace will be so overwhelmed that he will have no difficulty in carrying out his educational plan. This sounds well in theory but I do not think feasible in practice. This tendency in the Bureau which I do not find to my liking is probably the main reason for the bitter antagonism which exists between Dr. Schechter and Dr. Benderly. What to me is only jarring is to Dr. S [Schechter] hateful and offensive. . . . If I had anyone else more like minded to turn to and cooperate with I would never have much to do with Dr. B. [Benderly].48

Benderly’s Conflicts with Schechter

The issues between Benderly and Schechter were mainly ideological, but there was also competition between them on other levels. The Bureau of Jewish Education had been organized while Schechter was on sabbatical. Jacob Kohn, a favorite of Schechter’s, explained the matter very clearly in a letter he wrote to a colleague in 1914.
The Bureau was organized in the year of his [Schechter's] absence, because it was known that he opposed the selection of Benderly, and because he desired such a bureau to be attached to the Seminary, and not to the Kehillah. You see how completely Dr. Schechter's plans have been frustrated. Dr. Benderly has been chosen, the bureau was organized independently of the Seminary, and now through the cooperation of Benderly, Friedlaender, and Kaplan, the Teachers Institute and its funds act virtually as a body subordinate [sic] to the educational Bureau and as a training school for its teachers.49

It is quite clear that Benderly wanted to control, or perhaps even take over, the Teachers Institute. In a report issued by the Bureau of Jewish Education in May of 1911, Benderly stated that "it is our opinion that the Teachers Institute must stand out as an institution by itself. That is to say, detached from the Seminary." He maintained that the Seminary was too far uptown and did not have enough space for a teachers school of the scope that he felt was necessary. In Benderly's plan for Jewish education in New York, the institution that trained the teachers would play a central role. Benderly had strong opinions about its curriculum and faculty. With respect to curriculum, he believed that a full humanities component was essential—courses in English language and literature, general history, and civics, along with the courses in classical Jewish texts, Hebrew, and Jewish history. The kind of institution Benderly had in mind was very different from the one that Schechter had set up. To complete the picture, it is important to note that Schechter left the Teachers Institute very much to Kaplan. The separate location plus Schechter's attitude explains Kaplan's relative autonomy. In 1915, for example, Schechter wrote to Marshall: "As you know my relations to this Institute are rather slight. Having since years determined not to interfere in its affairs in any way."

Benderly was in constant consultation with Kaplan. It is not clear whether Kaplan agreed with all of the elements in Benderly's plan, but he must have accepted at least some of them, since in February of 1911, Benderly wrote Judah Magnes: "After many visits to the Institute and many talks with Dr. Kaplan, its principal, I have come to the conclusion, with which Dr. Kaplan is in accord, that the Teachers Institute as at present constituted cannot solve the problem of Jewish teachers." Benderly added that the Teachers Institute ought to be graduating a hundred teachers a year and should have an annual budget of $50,000.50 If Schechter was bothered by Benderly, there was good reason.
Schechter’s problem with Benderly surfaced also in connection with Israel Friedlaender. In 1912 Benderly was interested in holding classes for Talmud Torah teachers who needed extra training in order to qualify for the higher standards set up by the Bureau. Friedlaender, writing to Schechter, apparently felt that the Seminary should not conduct the classes for the Bureau because this would result in unnecessary criticism from Orthodox groups. We do not know Schechter’s stand on this matter, but Friedlaender was apparently disgusted with the whole situation because he felt he was in the middle. He wrote to Schechter that “if... your attitude will remain one of active or passive resistance to it [the Bureau] then nothing will remain for me to do but to withdraw from the Bureau, so as to avoid a conflict of duties, which is doubly painful because it is personal.” The depth of Schechter’s feeling is illustrated by an incident later in 1912 when he got angry because he thought that a teaching position was being given to someone Benderly had recommended rather than a candidate from the Teachers Institute who was also being considered. Friedlaender investigated and found out that the position had not yet been awarded to anyone.53 We also find Schechter venting his spleen about Benderly in a letter to Cyrus Adler in 1914.

We are spending our powers in Benderlyizing the community, ... you cannot realize the mischief done by this so-called Educational Bureau. Its powers of advertising, persuading the public that it represents a moral agency; its secularizing more or less the whole of Jewish education; its want of sympathy with anything as a positive belief and its superficializing all Jewish thought.54

From time to time various interested parties attempted to bring some harmony into the relationship between Benderly and Schechter. In March 1915 the trustees of the Bureau of Jewish Education met at Louis Marshall’s house. Present were Marshall, Judah Magnes, Benderly, and Kaplan. Marshall, after the formal meeting was over, “touched on the advisability of establishing an understanding with Schechter.” He mentioned a proposal by Schechter that a man like Jacob Kohn ought to be on the board. “Dr. Benderly replied that if Kohn would be admitted into the Bureau, orthodox and reformed Judaism would also have a right to be represented,” and in consequence only confusion would result. Kaplan stated that he and Benderly both thought that the proposal was unreasonable. It is interest-
ing to note that Kaplan sided with Benderly and that Schechter’s proposal came from Marshall and not through Kaplan.53

As time passed things became more difficult for Schechter and the Seminary. By 1915, he was not in the best of health and may have been thinking about retirement. The resources of the Jewish community were concentrated in the Kehillah and in war relief and, therefore, money was difficult to raise. At a Seminary faculty meeting in May 1915, the matter of scholarships came up. Apparently there was not enough money to go around, and Schechter got angry and lost control of himself. Kaplan gives us a very graphic description:

... something seemed to be disturbing Dr. Schechter and he called for the list [of those who had applied for scholarships] ... one could see that a storm was brewing. One name was mentioned, then another without aim or purpose. Schechter was at a loss what to do. He was reluctant to refuse scholarships to men who had received them before. When questions of that kind were discussed, Professor Ginzberg usually leans back as far as he can in his chair, in serene indifference to the situation, and puffs away at his cigar. This, of course, only adds fuel to the fire. Finally, Schechter burst out. He fairly screamed at the top of his voice; he banged at the table, he jumped up and ran about the room hurling invectives. He aimed particularly at Friedlaender: “Do you think I am jealous of Magnes the ‘Manheeg Ha-Dor’ [the leader of our generation] or of Benderly when I say that since they have come the Seminary has gone down? There used to be a group of about twenty people to whom I could come for money whenever I needed it. That has now become impossible, because the ‘Burau’ (so he pronounced it) has to have $300,000 a year. I need scholarships and there is nobody to help me to get them. See what they are doing at Cincinnati. They give each man twice the amount we give. If we can’t offer scholarships, we can’t have any students. There used to be times when I could approach a member of the board for money to buy some rare manuscript. That is gone now, because the Burau wants to swallow up everything. Unfortunately, the last days of my life have become bound up with the Seminary and I hoped to see it before I die established on a firm footing. Instead of that it is going down and down ...” later on he calmed down somewhat and said, “I am really sorry that I have had to speak out this way, but it hurts me and I can’t help myself.”54

Kaplan’s Educational Philosophy

Kaplan felt that both Schechter and Benderly were narrow in their perspectives: Schechter exaggerated the threat from Benderly’s secularism, and Benderly failed to appreciate the potential of the synagogue as the focal point in the life of the Jews in America. Both Kaplan and Benderly departed from the uptown philanthropists, who saw
Jewish education only as a means of Americanizing the immigrants and feared Benderly, Kaplan, and Friedlaender because, in the words of a leading scholar of that period, they might “use Jewish education to convert immigrant children segregated by circumstances into separatists by choice. To the philanthropists, their funds were, perhaps stamping out one evil—the obscurantism of the heder master—by abetting another evil—the rampant ethnicism of Zionist leaders.” As a matter of fact, Kaplan’s philosophy of community and his efforts to implement his ideas were much more complex than the concept of simple ethnic separatism would indicate.

Kaplan clearly articulated his philosophy of Jewish education in an article he published in 1916. He began his essay by stating that democracy does not call for the amalgamation of all groups into the general culture. Rejecting the “melting pot” as a form of “social tyranny” and self-segregation as a “menace to peace and progress,” he opted for a middle road which he called partial segregation and which we might call healthy democratic group life. The aims and function of groups, especially religious ones, are analogous to those of families, he said. Thus, “the main claim that a religious community can put forth is that it is serving the same kind of purpose in the body politic as the family group though on a larger scale.” Such groups, he continued, foster individual self-fulfillment, teach decent values, and help to maintain needed social control. In a democracy the individual has a right to pursue his own happiness, and this logically entails his right to form groups which might pursue a common goal. Group life thus becomes essential to any democratic society, but the right of any group to a separate existence would be meaningless, he emphasized, if that group were not given the right to perpetuate itself, a process which takes place through education. A group such as the Jews should use their educational agencies and institutions to foster Jewish consciousness, which Kaplan defined as “becoming so integrated with the House of Israel that he conceives for it a loyalty which gives meaning to his life and value to his personality.” Such loyalty, indeed, is not in conflict with the loyalty of the Jew toward the larger society in which he lives, for Jewish consciousness will not endure “unless by means of it, our children will make better citizens of the state, unless it will fit them spiritually for the larger world in which they must live [and] unless it will give them worth and character.” Thus, he said, the goal of Jewish
education is particularistic and universal at the same time. It should foster “adjustment to environment and not to abstract principles.” It should create “in the child a sense of warm intimacy with the Jewish people . . . and a sense of exaltation in those experiences of his people which have constituted for the human race the very footprints of God.”

Although many of the Kehillah’s supporters were still concerned about the Americanization of the immigrants, to Kaplan and some of his colleagues (Samson Benderly, for example) it was already apparent that the problem was not Americanization but survival and distinctiveness. Americanization was succeeding all too well, and Kaplan was concerned about the survival of a community that was becoming thoroughly Americanized.

**Conclusion**

We have seen in this study of the Teachers Institute and the Bureau of Jewish Education a series of beginnings and a series of conflicts. Kaplan set up the Teachers Institute and made it a primary training ground for Jewish teachers in the United States. Together with Benderly and the Bureau, he helped to create the profession of Jewish education. The conflicts that emerged around him centered on the question of what kind of functionary and what kind of institution would most effectively serve the Jewish community. Schechter and his colleagues at the Seminary believed it would be the rabbi and the teacher as located within the synagogue. Benderly and others looked to a community educational system, with a support apparatus of Jewish welfare agencies, as the bulwark of Jewish survival. In one vision the rabbi was primary, in the other the teacher and the social worker. Kaplan’s work and observations during this period would ultimately lead him to feel that there might be one institution, a Jewish center, which could perform both the religious functions and the social functions and thus be the means of creating genuine Jewish community in America. That kind of creative thought led to his unique place in the pantheon of American Jewish thinkers.

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Foundations of Jewish Education of Mordecai M. Kaplan (1985) and is preparing a biography of Rabbi Kaplan.

Notes

1. New Era Illustrated Magazine 4, no. 3 (February 1904): 97.
3. For Schechter’s remark on the location of the Seminary, see Solomon Schechter to Cyrus Adler, May 22, 1907, Adler Papers, American Jewish Historical Society. For Schechter’s report on the staff, see “Report to Board of Trustees: April 26, 1908 by Solomon Schechter,” Marshall Papers, Box 20, American Jewish Archives.
4. On the committee see Solomon Schechter to Adolphus Solomons, November 10, 1908, Schechter Papers, JTS. On the Jewish Teachers College Fund, see Jacob H. Schiff to Louis Marshall, August 3, 1909, Marshall Papers, Box 24. On the model school downtown, see Solomon Schechter to Adolphus Solomons, April 9, 1909, Schechter Papers, JTS.
5. For Adler’s concern, see Cyrus Adler to Louis Marshall, May 6, 1909, Marshall Papers, Box 24. For Kahn’s refusal, see Solomon Schechter to Louis Marshall, June 17, 1909, Marshall Papers, Box 44. Before Schiff came up with the Teachers Fund, Schechter had offered the “Management of the Teachers Course” to Max Schloessinger, who had been employed at Hebrew Union College and left after a dispute with Kaufmann Kohler over the issue of Zionism. See Solomon Schechter to Louis Marshall April 30, 1908, Marshall Papers, Box 44. Schloessinger refused the offer primarily because he felt sufficient funds were not available to do the job right. Max Schloessinger to Louis Marshall, May 22, 1908, Marshall Papers, Box 20.
8. Interview with Kaplan, June 1972.
9. Kaplan reported in a 1972 interview that Adler resented his appointment because it was done by Schechter without consultation and also because Adler was still annoyed by his refusal to go along with Adler’s scheme in 1902 of deferring graduation to 1904. Kaplan believed that Adler had written something quite negative about him to Schechter, but that Schechter had disagreed and replied that he was “inspiring and stimulating.” For Schechter’s remark but not the remark by Adler to which it was allegedly a response, see Moshe Davis, “Jewish Religious Life and Institutions in America,” in The Jews: Their History, Culture and Religion, ed. Louis Finkelstein (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), vol. 1, p. 537. Schechter, as a matter of fact, did consult Adler, who agreed with the appointment of Kaplan, according to Schechter. Solomon Schechter to Louis Marshall, June 17, 1909, Marshall Papers, Box 44. This letter also contains the other details about the interview and Schechter’s remark about Kaplan being strong. It is probable that Adler heard Kaplan’s speech because he was on the same program. Charles Hoffman to Louis Marshall, December 28, 1909, Marshall Papers, Box 24. The program consisted of Solomon Schechter, who spoke on “Recent Hebrew Literature,” Cyrus Adler on “The Part of the Alumni Association in the Promotion of Judaism in America,” and Kaplan, whose speech was
entitled “Nationalism as a Religious Dogma.” At this meeting Kaplan was also elected to the executive committee, along with C. H. Kauvar, Jacob Kohn, and Julius Greenstone, among others. See American Hebrew 85 (June 11, 1909).

10. Solomon Schechter to Cyrus Adler, June 29, 1909, Schechter Papers, JTS.

11. The teaching of homiletics was, however, a rather low priority at the Seminary, as evidenced by the fact that when Asher was sick, Schechter appointed two senior students to take his place. “Report of Solomon Schechter to the Board of Directors, November 21, 1909,” Marshall Papers, Box 24.

12. One afternoon in June 1915 Kaplan spent more than two hours with Schechter. The next day he wrote in his journal, “He was quite genial and frank with me. For once he seemed to display some interest in me personally. He told me that I have a great future before me. He said, . . . I should finish the edition of Shir HaShirim Rabba.” Kaplan Journal, June 9, 1915. Kaplan worked on this scholarly project for many years. He never received his doctorate, and it may be that he intended to use this project as a dissertation. There are many hundreds of cards among the Kaplan papers dealing with Shir Hashirim Rabba. Apparently when Kaplan was abroad in 1908 he copied a manuscript in Frankfurt which he used in connection with other more well known manuscripts of this midrash. The Frankfurt MS was lost during World War II, and according to Dr. Samuel Lachs, an expert on the subject, Kaplan’s copy of the MS is the only one in existence. In 1913 Kaplan wrote to Marshall asking whether he could get the American ambassador in Rome to help in securing a copy of a Vatican manuscript of Shir Hashirim Rabba. Kaplan mentioned that the critical text he was working on was to be published by the Seminary. Mordecai Kaplan to Louis Marshall, Marshall Papers, Box 44, JTS Folder. The faculty at the Seminary knew of the Kaplan work and turned to him when they were interested in Shir Hashirim Rabba. In November 1940, for example, Louis Finkelstein, the president of the Seminary, wrote to Kaplan asking him about a particular phrase and the way it appeared in the Frankfurt manuscript. Louis Finkelstein to Mordecai Kaplan, November 25, 1940, Kaplan Archives, RRC.

13. Schechter was responsible for Kaplan’s being assigned this project. Schechter wrote him about it on Thursday, November 18, 1915, and he received the letter the next day immediately after he learned of Schechter’s death. Kaplan Journal, November 21, 1915. Kaplan’s translation was one of the Schiff Classics published by the Jewish Publication Society, Mesillat Yesharim—The Path of the Upright by Moses Hayyim Luzzatto: A Critical Edition Provided with a Translation and Notes by Mordecai M. Kaplan (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1936).

14. In his later life Kaplan had the habit of reading his journal, and his memory was often influenced by what he had written there. His claim that Schechter was considering him as a successor, first voiced in 1972, may be an instance of this, for the relevant journal entry is by no means clear. On September 15, 1915, a few months before Schechter died, Kaplan recorded that Schechter told him, “[You] ought to get into the ring,” and then noted, “He hinted darkly that it [scholarship] was a necessary condition to my attaining something higher—he did not say what.” In any case, it is quite clear that Louis Ginzberg believed that Schechter had him in mind. See Eli Ginzberg, The Keeper of the Law, p. 133. In 1977 Eli wrote, “my father wanted to be Schechter’s successor and resented the fact that he was not the choice of his colleagues or the Board.” Eli Ginzberg, “The Seminary Family,” in Perspectives on Jews and Judaism: Essays in Honor of Wolfe Kelman, ed. Arthur A. Chiel (New York: Rabbinical Assembly 1978), p. 118.


16. See the dedication of Kaplan’s The Religion of Ethical Nationhood (New York: The
Foundations of Jewish Education

Macmillan Co., 1970): "To the memory of Ahad Ha-am (Asher Ginzberg) who revealed to me the spiritual reality of the Jewish people, of Solomon Schechter who granted me the opportunity to transmit it to my students and of Louis Dembitz Brandeis, who pleaded for ethical nationhood in American life."

17. Mordecai Kaplan to Alvin Johnson, April 30, 1933, Kaplan Archives, RRC. Kaplan never sent the letter we have just quoted. The day after he wrote it, he recorded the following in his journal: "I wrote the letter to Alvin Johnson and Lena typed it. She objected to my sending it. I yielded to her objection and instead wrote the usual excuse of not having time." Kaplan Journal, May 1, 1933.

18. M. M. Kaplan, "The Teacher's Institute and Its Affiliated Departments," p. 125; see also the announcement of Kaplan's appointment in the American Hebrew 85 (July 16, 1909): 284. The Seminary paid no rent to the Uptown Talmud Torah and put the president of its board on the board of the Teachers College. It is clear that the arrangement was unsatisfactory. See Solomon Schechter to Louis Marshall, August 2, 1909, Marshall Papers, AJA, Box 44. For more on the Uptown Talmud Torah, see Jeffrey S. Gurock, When Harlem Was Jewish 1870–1930 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), pp. 98–110. For Schechter's remark about a Jewish university, see Solomon Schechter to Louis Marshall October 13, 1909, Marshall Papers, AJA, Box 44. On the move to the Hebrew Technical Institute, see Alexander Dushkin, Jewish Education in New York City (New York: Bureau of Jewish Education, 1918), p. 97. Stuyvesant Street is between 9th and 10th Streets in the East Village, not far from the Lower East Side. The Hebrew Technical Institute was a vocational high school for boys. See Jewish Communal Register of New York City 1917–1918, p. 657, for a description of the school and a picture of the building. The building is now part of NYU. The Teachers Institute had a library, an office, and a number of classrooms in the annex. Kaplan's brothers-in-law contributed $6,000 toward the purchase of books for the library. Kaplan Journal, June 17, 1916.

19. The number sixteen is found in Mordecai Kaplan, "The Teacher's Institute," Students Annual of the Jewish Theological Seminary, 1915, p. 62. In October 1909, when classes began Schechter reported that there were twenty-two students. See Schechter to Louis Marshall, October 13, 1909, Marshall Papers, Box 44. In 1925 the Seminary Register listed the first class as consisting of thirty-five students. Other teacher-training schools established later include the Teachers Institute of Mizrachi (founded in 1917); the Baltimore Hebrew College (1919); and the Hebrew Teachers College in Boston (1921). See Oscar Janowsky, ed., The Education of American Jewish Teachers (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 5.


22. "Paper Read at Meeting of Alumni at Tannersville, July 1912," Kaplan Archive, RRC. The theme of the meeting was Tradition and the Bible," gave rise to considerable discussion. American Hebrew 91 (June 12, 1912): 293. Two years later Kaplan published this paper, with some revisions, as "The Supremacy of the
He was apparently reluctant to publish the speech but was happy that it created "some discussion among the graduates and [seemed] to have aroused a few of them from their apparent indifference to the fundamental questions of Torah, revelation, etc." Kaplan Journal, August 23, 1914.

Schechter told Kaplan, with respect to his ideas on the Bible, that he was "walking on eggs," and at one point in 1915 warned him that he had a great future before him but must not commit himself to any views about the Bible that he might later have to retract. Kaplan Journal, June 9, 1915. Even some of Kaplan's old friends had reservations about the article. Julius Greenstone, an important scholar in his own right and Kaplan's roommate during his student days at the Seminary, wrote him in July 1914, "I believe that I told you in my last letter how much I enjoyed your article in the Annual. It is splendidly written, the arguments are exceedingly well marshalled and the illustrations are most happy. As far as your principal thesis is concerned, you, no doubt, succeeded in proving it and I cannot but agree with you in principle. My disagreement with you is not so much in the principle that you wish to establish as in the basis which you would give to it. That the Torah is supreme in Jewish life is agreed, but that the basis of this supremacy is the fact that Israel has made it supreme is open to contention." Julius Greenstone to Mordecai Kaplan, June 8, 1914, Kaplan Archives, RRC.

23. On the early years of the Institute, see Kaplan, "The Teachers Institute and Its Affiliated Departments," passim. For a description of the course in religion, see Seminary Register 1918-19, p. 37. The quotations from Kaplan's course in religion at the Institute are from notes taken in the autumn of 1915 by Leon Liebreich, a second-year student. They are found among the Kaplan papers at the American Jewish Archives. There is always a risk in quoting student notes, but in this case, since we have so much on Kaplan's ideas at the time, we can see that the notes are an accurate reflection of his thinking.


25. For the shift from English to Hebrew, see Kaplan, "The Teachers Institute," Students Annual 1915, p. 129. On revising the standards upward, see ibid., p. 62.

26. For the levels of diplomas, see "Teachers Institute Report," June 12, 1917. Jacob Schiff Papers, Box 458, and "Teachers Institute Report," February 3, 1920, Jacob H. Schiff Papers, Box 470, Folder Education. Both these reports are at the American Jewish Archives.


31. Ibid., p. 459.

32. Goren, New York Jews, p. 88. The generous friend was, of course, Jacob H. Schiff.


36. Kaplan’s remark on mutual need, see ibid. For the trustees of the Bureau, see Magnes Papers, P3/F 1-L:22 Memo April 1910 at AIA.


38. Rebecca A. Brickner, “As I Remember Dr. Benderly,” *Jewish Education* 20, no. 3 (Summer 1949): 58. In addition to the achievements noted in the text, Benderly also founded the Jewish Teachers Association of New York, which published the *Jewish Teacher*, with Alexander Dushkin as editor, Isaac Berkson as business manager, and Mordecai Kaplan, Julius Greenstone, and Harry Friedenwald as members of the advisory board. This journal ceased publishing in 1924, but in 1929 the National Council for Jewish Education (organized in 1926 and consisting of school principals, executive heads of bureaus, and professors at teachers colleges) began publishing *Jewish Education*, also with Dushkin as editor.


42. For Kaplan’s remark about having little faith, see Kaplan Journal, October 3, 1914. The members of the first group were Rebecca Aronson (who eventually married), Barnett Brickner (who became a leading Reform rabbi), Isaac Berkson (later an important theorist of Jewish education and a professor of education at City College), Ben H. Birnbaum, Israel Chipkin (later registrar at the Teachers Institute, an organizer of the American Association for Jewish Education, director of the Jewish Education Association of New York, and editor of *Jewish Education*), Alexander Dushkin (very active at the Bureau, organizer of the *Jewish Teacher*, taught and helped organize the Department of Education at the Hebrew University, director of the Bureau of Jewish Education, Chicago, a founder of the Hebrew Teachers College in Chicago, and editor of *Jewish Education*), Leo Honor (taught at the Teachers Institute, director of the Board of Jewish Education in Chicago, professor of education at Dropsie College in Philadelphia), Marvin Isaacs, Louis Prashker, and Ben Rosen. Kaplan Pocket Calender, 1913, RRC.

43. The “ceaseless chatter” each morning is from Dushkin, “Personality of Samson Benderly” p. 10. Benderly as the Hasidic rebbe is from Dushkin, *Living Bridges*, p. 12.

44. Kaplan Journal, October 4, 1914.


48. All the quotations in this paragraph are from Kaplan Journal, October 4, 1914, only part of which appeared in Kaplan’s article in *Jewish Education* in 1949. Regarding the matter of doctorates earned by members of the first Benderly group, we may note that Alexander Dushkin’s *Jewish Education in New York City* and Isaac Berkson’s *Theories of Americanization: A Critical Study* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1920) were both based on Ph.D. dissertations.

49. Jacob Kohn to H. H. Rubenovitz, February 18, 1914 as cited in Herbert Rosenblum,

50. For the Benderly report of May 1911, see Magnes Papers, P3/F 1–L:23 at AJA. Benderly's statement about expanding the Teachers Institute is in Report of February 8, 1911, Bureau of Jewish Education, Magnes Papers, AJA. See the exchange between Magnes and Schiff on Benderly's scheme for an educational fund. The total yearly budget Benderly requested was $100,000. Magnes asked Schiff to donate half the money on condition that Magnes come up with the rest. Schiff reacted quickly, asserting that it would take an endowment of $2,000,000 to generate such a yearly budget. The ever generous Schiff was willing to donate $10,000 a year for ten years. See J. L. Magnes to Jacob Schiff, March 9, 1911, and Jacob Schiff to J. L. Magnes, March 20, 1911, in Magnes Papers, AJA. For Schechter's remark about the Teachers Institute, see Solomon Schechter to Louis Marshall August 5, 1915, Marshall Papers, Box 44.

51. On Friedlaender's withdrawing, see Israel Friedlaender to Solomon Schechter, January 24, 1912, Friedlaender Papers, JTS; on the teaching position, see Solomon Schechter to Israel Friedlaender October 7, 1912, and Israel Friedlaender to Solomon Schechter October 13, 1912, Friedlaender Papers, JTS.

52. Solomon Schechter to Cyrus Adler, January 8, 1914, Schechter Papers, JTS. The Seminary's position is also illustrated by the fact that the dues to the Kehillah were not paid promptly. On March 1913 the Kehillah office wrote Friedlaender a letter asking for the unpaid dues from the year before ($10). Kehillah Office to Israel Friedlaender, March 25, 1913, Friedlaender Papers, JTS.


54. Ibid., May 27, 1915.


58. The day before Schechter died, he and Kaplan had a long talk. Schechter complained that the Seminary received little recognition from such wealthy philanthropists as Felix Warburg and said he was "afraid to invite lecturers on philanthropic matters because they inevitably stress their dissociation from the Seminary and what it stands for." Kaplan Journal, November 18, 1915.
Review Essay

The Outsider as Outsider?
German Intellectual Exiles in America After 1930

Suzanne Shipley Toliver


Five decades separate modern America from the events which drove thousands of German-speaking, mostly Jewish, refugees to seek its shelter. The topic of their emigration from Nazi Germany has become both a timely and a significant subject of scholarly inquiry. The three volumes under review represent important contributions to that inquiry.

In 1980, inspired by the one-hundredth birthday of Albert Einstein, the Smithsonian Institution convened two colloquia to review the results of the creative migration from Hitler's Germany to the Americas. The Muses Flee Hitler: Cultural Transfer and Adaptation 1930–1945, compiled from selected colloquia papers, documents the contributions made by exiles in diverse disciplines and in a wide variety of geographical locations. Unlike previous efforts of German Exilsforschung, the study offers a global, universally accessible sampling of ideas on the nature of exile. As such, The Muses Flee Hitler complements and expands upon Laura Fermi's Illustrious Immigrants (1968, rev. ed. 1971) and The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1933–1960 (1969), edited by Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn.
Initial emphasis is placed on the origins of Nazism, the rise of anti-Semitism, and the persecution of Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals in Hitler's Germany. The uprooting and subsequent resettlement of European emigres appears even more dramatic an historical phenomenon when viewed in the context of how and what was destroyed: entire intellectual and creative networks were disassembled and rendered forever unproductive by political fanaticism. The Federal Republic of Germany is today fully aware of this void in its intellectual life.

The first section “Background and Migration,” contains Alan Beyerchen's evaluation of Hitler's purge of his brightest intellectual luminaries as "a demand for cultural homogeneity so strong that, in order to obtain it, the population was willing to forfeit creativity and excellence, even to pay the price of the intellectual decapitation of Germany" (p. 41). Yet, as Herbert A. Strauss’s review of Nazi policy toward the Jews reveals, reality in Hitler’s Germany remained open to interpretation—intended victims of fascist persecution had no uniform code of treatment upon which to base their decisions to stay or to go. Even for those aware of the implications of their being outcasts, emigration did not guarantee actual asylum. America, like many of the nations considered in this volume, was ill prepared to diminish their desperation. Roger Daniels's review of American refugee policy concludes that our country’s history offers “a sorry chronicle of events” in response to such urgent need. Cynthia Jaffee McCabe's presentation of Varian Fry's efforts for the Emergency Rescue Committee epitomizes the success that one attempt to free artists, scholars, musicians, and writers could achieve: by 1941 Fry had helped over one thousand refugees caught by transit restrictions in France to flee to the United States.

In "The Muses in America," the country's quickening response to the increasing dimensions of the Holocaust is traced in the reception of the muses at the workplace. Physicists, chemists, mathematicians, as well as writers, musicians and architects are presented in the process of this adaptation by colleagues in their respective fields—from H. Stuart Hughes's "Social Theory in a New Context" to Alfred Kazin's "European Writers in Exile" and Nathan Reingold's "Refugee Mathematicians in the United States." Thus a valuable variety of models emerge from which to survey the contributions made by those "muses" whose
flight from Hitler did not sever but rather made more resilient occupational ties.

The final papers in the volume address the topic of exile in various centers of the Americas, in Canada, Argentina, and the circum-Caribbean (Great Britain is also included). With one exception, Judith Laikin Elkin’s “The Reception of the Muses in the Circum-Caribbean,” the activity described in the centers is neither interpreted nor placed in a context for evaluation. While the brief nod given emigre existence in Shanghai is welcome, little new material is presented. As Elkin’s example indicates, enough information has been collected on the centers mentioned to move on to a measurement of host country receptivity to their immigrant populations. Without integration and analysis of the facts, neither the benefit to the emigrant nor to the host culture can be assessed. Elkin’s conclusion that “nowhere in the circum-Caribbean did a muse of international stature emerge [and that] these republics spurned the opportunity to import and naturalize the creative talent Nazism cast loose in the world” (p. 301) highlights the efforts described in the preceding papers. From the panoply of individual struggles emerges the profile of the muse in America, a creative force not spurned—perhaps accepted after unheroic delay, yet allowed to find nourishment from a receptive, even supportive foreign soil.

“Few Americans understood the extent of the social and personal hardships experienced by the European intellectuals living in their midst after 1933” (p. 17), a past predicament remedied by reading Helmut Pfanner’s refreshing study of exile existence in New York. Exile in New York draws upon relatively unfamiliar sources (in place of the ubiquitous quotations from Thomas Mann and Bertolt Brecht, both of whom qualify for inclusion in this volume, the author offers anecdotes from Alfred Gong and Martin Gumpert), and Pfanner communicates well the cultural and psychological displacement typical of exile. He focuses attention on the geographical environs of New York City, and, although he does not emphasize a sense of community among the writers he describes, this approach offers valuable examples for future considerations of similar centers, such as Mexico City, Los Angeles, Paris, or London.

A wealth of material eminently suitable for a seminar on the exile experience is included in Pfanner’s study; the major physical and psy-
chological hardships of exile are illustrated by literary and auto-biographical texts. Alongside the difficulties of exile—the economic insecurity, linguistic humiliation, social displacement, the bewilderment and despair—stand the triumphs. Convincingly Pfanner expresses the sense of commitment felt by these exiled authors, their determination to fulfill a self-appointed obligation to a culture betrayed, to a history misguided. Although Pfanner’s approach to his topic is more popular than scholarly, a biobibliographical appendix of authors relevant to the study indicates an effort to contribute to serious exile scholarship. Yet the effort does not entirely succeed. Although almost one-fifth of the entries in the appendix, for instance, include women authors, only two works by women receive noticeable attention in this volume, Adrienne Thomas’s Ein Fenster am East River (A Window Overlooking the East River) and Bella Fromm’s Die Engel weinen (The Angels Are Weeping). Just as disproportionately does Pfanner discuss the role of women in exile, for his comments are limited to the wives of exile authors, rather than to women authors in exile. Although he praises exile wives’ willingness to work in unskilled positions to support husbands and families, he concludes, “low-paying jobs were more acceptable to exile wives because, unlike their husbands, they ordinarily had not held important positions in their native countries and were not too proud to do physical labor” (pp. 80–81).

Because subjective influences and emotional issues are intrinsic to the study of the exile environment, Pfanner cannot, of course, be limited to a purely objective approach to his topic. Less of an emphasis upon the emigres’ gratitude toward America might have provided a more realistic context for the authors he quotes. By dwelling upon the humanitarian efforts of Americans, Pfanner loses sight of the real relationship between the exile authors and their hosts, one surely of give and take for all concerned. “Thankfulness toward the country that had sheltered them best describes the essential reaction of the German and Austrian refugees who had fled the Third Reich and settled in New York” (p. 172) is just one such assumption among many to be questioned in this regard.

Especially intrusive is Pfanner’s lack of objectivity in treating the works of Marxist exile authors in New York. He assures readers that Hans Marchwitza “betrays the typical Communist prejudice against the United States,” that Bruno Frei’s assessment of America was
marked by “political biases reflected in every sentence he wrote about the United States,” and that Alfred Kantorowicz could criticize his host country so unjustly because “the Communist exile writers viewed the new sights through eyes conditioned by their ideology” (pp. 39–40). Even in the index, where most authors’ names are followed only by titles of works with their page of mention, beside Marchwitza’s name are the labels “Communist prejudice,” “criticism of U.S.,” and “self-pity” (p. 250).

In spite of shortcomings, Pfanner’s Exile in New York provides a long-awaited shift of attention on the part of exile scholarship. Pfanner approaches the personal with real precision, artfully integrating the biographical and the literary. Obvious are the rigors of retrieving a creative identity in the initial vacuum of exile. But beside the anguish of displacement emerges a potential for unique perception, the startling result of a merging of two cultures, the meeting of a person with a place of protection. One completes this book with an unanticipated gladness for the gifts America and Americans bestowed upon those authors in flight from the nightmare of Nazism.

Rarely does a book about refugees receive the attention afforded Anthony Heilbut’s Exiled in Paradise. The author aims this book “to be a social and cultural history of the German-speaking emigres in America” (p. x), which in some ways it is. In most instances, however, the work instead answers the question “How did the German-speaking emigres raise the level of cultural sophistication in America?” which is quite a different matter than documenting a cultural history. The first of the book’s three sections, “Europe to America,” promises valuable insights, beginning with the Berlin cafe culture the emigres were to desert: “They would all leave Germany, but when they did, the best of them took with them the spirit nourished in those cafes—the social concerns, the cultivated irony, the good sense” (p. 21). Heilbut recognizes a preparation for flight to America in intellectual life before Hitler: “looking for new models, the artists turned to America, the homeland of novelties. America had already entered the mythology of German dreams through the visionary poems of Walt Whitman and the Wild West action tales of the German novelist Karl May” (p. 17). In subsequent chapters, “In Transit,” “Becoming American,” “The Academic Welcome,” and “Left and Right,” Heilbut traces the phases of the initiation process common to many emigres—from visa complica-
tions through the job search and adjustment to new political concerns. [“Emigres would always appear politically eccentric to Americans . . . by virtue of both their assumption that welfare was a citizen’s right and their intense concern with public events” (p. 69).]

Not one to avoid issues of a controversial nature, Heilbut moves from political to social or religious concerns easily, noting, for example, that “emigration forced the male refugee to reconsider his wife’s talents,” just as “becoming American was a difficult and humiliating experience for the emigre father” (pp. 69–70), who could easily feel overtaken by his family’s more rapid cultural assimilation. Heilbut is especially forthright in his evaluation of immigration procedures in America, stating that “the obstacles to Jewish emigration set up by officers of the U.S. foreign service constituted a scandal that has tarnished this country’s history” (p. 39). He argues that this country’s resistance to Jewish refugees could have been combated by American Jews, who, instead, “were less than cordial in their welcome” (p. 45). Upper-class American Jews, according to Heilbut, found refugees “an embarrassing hindrance to assimilation, while the lower-class Jews resented them for being a source of competition” (p. 44). Finally, Heilbut describes the source of the Marxist orientation among many of the more politically active emigres, explaining that “up to August 1939, Marxist organizations were the most aggressively anti-Fascist group” (p. 103).

In the second section of Exiled in Paradise, Heilbut examines the influence of such disparate figures as Bertolt Brecht, Thomas Mann, and Theodor W. Adorno. Taking Adorno as middle ground, one for whom the word “homeland” meant “a state of having escaped,” Heilbut essentially presents a sociology of the failed encounter. In emphasizing the viewpoint of one whose “disdain for American culture bordered on the pathological” (p. 160), Heilbut loses sight of the peripherality of emigrant existence, placing undue emphasis on the impact of these intellectuals, ignoring the fact that American culture often proved elusive to emigre interpretation. From the introductory comment that “everything about the German-speaking refugees from Hitler who settled here between 1933 and 1941 was special, and much of it was anomalous” (p. vii), the author claims that “once the refugees had established themselves, it seemed as though America couldn’t make a step, public or private, without their guidance” (p. 196).
"Thanks largely to emigre academics," Heilbut proclaims, "Americans became concerned with the sheer act of looking." "When Americans scurried to work or returned home, they were surrounded by emigre design" (pp. 142-143). Heilbut suggests that the theater director Erwin Piscator's "aesthetic vision honed with the aid of Gropius proved to be a more durable source of inspiration in America than politics," and that "the mere existence of a Piscator theater in New York must have contributed to a Berlinization of sensibility" (p. 227). The son of emigres from Berlin, Heilbut often demonstrates such lack of perspective in placing the accomplishments of emigres in the proper context.

Part III, "The Return of the Enemy Aliens," continues the concentration on cultural criticism posited by emigres in America. A recently published study, Lewis A. Coser's Refugee Scholars in America: Their Impact and Their Experiences (Yale University Press, 1984), manages to present the same figures in a totally different manner. Its author admits that "in order for cultural materials to be transmitted successfully, there must exist an audience that is at least potentially receptive to new messages" (p. xii), something Heilbut has overlooked or suppressed in his study. In the final chapter, "Heroes of the 1960s," the author casts his emigres in a heroic vision, as if to combat the "final though not unfamiliar irony of the emigres' contribution to American culture that their positions should be recast by others in a tone and idiom that vulgarized them" (p. 439). Heilbut praises their involvement in the controversies over McCarthyism, German reconstruction, the atomic bomb and the postwar arms race, American anti-Semitism, and the Vietnam War. He concludes, "the emigres had arrived as enemy aliens, and often went out the same way . . . to find oneself turned once again into an enemy alien for being an intellectual was to discover that one remained an outsider; there appeared to be no home for these cosmopolitans" (p. 476). This is a strong statement against America's reception of the muses fleeing Hitler—one that provokes consideration, but does not convince.

—Suzanne Shipley Toliver

Suzanne Shipley Toliver is an assistant professor of German at the University of Cincinnati. She is the author of Exile and the Elemental in the Poetry of Erich Arendt (1984).

Whatever the Jewish experience in North America has been, its reflection in the work of Canadian writers helps make it more concrete and more intelligible. From the small Jewish community north of the border have emerged some remarkable writers—A. M. Klein, Irving Layton, Leonard Cohen, Mordecai Richler. Saul Bellow comes from that community, as does Shulamis Yelin. Generalizations are inevitably risky, but these Jews seem on the whole less “Anglo-Saxonized,” less anxious about questions of identity, closer in psychology to their East European immigrant beginnings, than their brethren in the United States. Theirs is still a relatively unmediated, even tribal emotionality, and from a south-of-the-border perspective the Canadians may appear less prone to striving for sophisticated self-definition, less bent on eschewing the nostalgic and the sentimental, less daunted by “the lies my father told me.”

Some sense of what it might be proper to call a frontier experience was evident in Shulamis Yelin’s collection of poems, *Seeded in Sinai*; such a sense achieves centrality in this book. Of course in any work which is not alien to the genre of childhood reminiscence, an elemental quality is natural enough, and here in these “stories from a Montreal childhood” that quality is given a Yiddish accent and a family context. We learn of red ribbons tied on a cradle to ward off the evil eye; we are introduced to the “break with parental ties . . . the baptism of anglicization” imposed by the Protestant school authorities in the form of personal names reflective of Canadian English culture superseding “Jewish names given at birth”; we listen to Papa Borodensky: “Here is Canada, not Russia. Here a person has to know everything”—not excluding the New Testament portion of the King James Bible.

It is all told with a gentle “sense of bereavement,” an unashamed, unembarrassed evocation of a lost era, and with the charm of a poet’s
reverie. The *Leidensgeschichte* ("history of suffering") so much a feature of European memory is very little in evidence here, but tensions are not absent.

Mrs. Yelin recalls a Christmas tree at a local candy store:

I was not much disturbed by the Christmas tree at Malo's. It was beautiful and magical, but somewhere in my head there was a fence with a sign on it that read, "Malo's Candy Store corner Cadieux and Prince Arthur is good for candy and scribblers and things, but that's all."

Some pages further on, speaking of her first visit years later to Scotland, she remembers how the songs of the country, familiar to her from her Montreal schooldays, reduced her to tears:

a well of long-repressed tears, ... tears that had congealed in those classrooms of my childhood where the teachers spoke of a Mother Country which was not mine and of which my parents knew nothing. My parents were immigrants, and grateful. But Mother Country? Was *Matyushka Russya* their Mother Country? And which was mine? Tears in Edinburgh. I wept for the Jewish children whose parents had given them no positive sense of themselves as Jews, and for Jews who had beguiled themselves into believing they were Germans, Poles, or Frenchmen, only to become statistics in our own ancient history. I wept the unwept tears of the outsider who hungers to belong.

*Shulamis*, which contains a number of photographs and also drawings by Ghitta Caiserman-Roth, was published with the assistance of the Canada Council. Readers will thank the publisher and the Council for the pleasure of Mrs. Yelin's "indelible tale."

—Stanley F. Chyet


*Jewish Writing Down Under*, edited by Robert and Roberta Kalechofsky, helps us to explore two of the most isolated and intriguing Jewish communities in the world, Australia and New Zealand. Australian Jewry began haphazardly in 1788 with the arrival of a shipload of English prisoners, among them a handful of Jewish convicts. Conditions in the young penal colony were difficult at best, and in the scramble for food and shelter, religion received a low priority. This was enhanced by the dearth of Jewish women, making intermarriage an unavoidable reality. The situation improved markedly only in the 1850's, when the smell of gold lured fortune-hungry Jews to the Antipodes. Concurrently, the New Zealand Jewish community emerged with the immigration of English gentry to the island. Although the social origins of the two countries' Jewish communities varied, their common problems of isolation and assimilation threatened and continue to threaten survival. In spite of this the Australian and New Zealand Jewish communities have flourished and have achieved a degree of acceptance unparalleled in the modern world. Australasian (Australia and New Zealand) Jews have held positions as heads of the state, the judiciary, and the armed forces.

In the Kalechofskys' anthology, we are treated to the work of eighteen Australasian writers and poets highlighting Jewish life Down Under. Naturally some subjects are more interesting than others, and, as with any anthology, the pieces vary in quality. The book is loosely organized thematically, beginning with historical material, some of which is tedious. Despite this slow start, the book picks up with Serge Liberman's well-written account of seventy years of Yiddish theater in Melbourne, followed by Herz Bergner's poignant tale "The Actor." In the latter, a former star of the Yiddish-Polish stage finds his performances less and less well received in his new home. He struggles to find
the right piece to perform to communicate to these secularized Jews:

This time the programme was a risky one. He had made a selection of the finest and most characteristic examples of Yiddish literature and he did not know how an audience living in such a non-Jewish world would receive them. He did not know where he would be able to continue making a living as an actor, or whether he would have to accept the shrill, humiliating advice of his wife, a one-time Yiddish actress, and take up a business or trade. (p. 63)

The story ends with the hero’s son complimenting his father on his outstanding performance, but tenderly apologizing that “the people were a bit tired” (p. 70). Yet, as the next story, “Two Years in Exile,” echoes repeatedly, “The wound festers where others have healed” (p. 84). Here the pull of the secular culture wins out: “Ancestry and progeny have parted. The son has abandoned his past” (p. 84).

The freshest part of the anthology is entitled “Faces You Can’t Find Again.” Here we are introduced to such “dinky-di” (genuinely Australian) Aussie characters as Tim Tapple, one of several “Garden Island People” among whom noted Australian anthologist and author Nancy Keesing was “marooned” during the Second World War, or Isaac Shur and his artistic life-style in Tangiers, or the Tyler “clan” that Eileen “The Eel” Scott discovers in “The House on Lafayette Street.”

Seven poets are featured in the poetry section, which varies in quality. The insightful poems of Charles Brasch paint gorgeous landscapes of New Zealand and deal profoundly with problems of theology. On the other hand, the editors have included an out-of-place syrupy ode to Halley’s Comet. This latter poem raises the problem of what constitutes Jewish literature. Is it merely a Jew’s authorship or something more? Does a poem about a comet or a bus traveler in Denver belong in an anthology of Jewish writing Down Under?

In the final section, entitled “Memories and Redemption,” Jewish content abounds; unfortunately it revolves almost exclusively around the Holocaust and its effects. How do the generations cope with the aftermath of the Holocaust? Succeeding poetry and prose present various responses: a lashing out at everyone, as in the poem “How Come the Truckloads?”; a rejection of familial and communal mores through intermarriage, as portrayed in “Drifting”; or an exploration of Israel, as described in “All the Storms and Sun-sets.” Each of these pieces sensitively and unashamedly challenges the reader to come to
terms with this key tragedy which, ironically, because of the attendant waves of refugee and survivor immigration, is responsible for the efflorescence of Jewish life today in Australasia.

Yet these very immigrants faced prejudice in their newly chosen home. In “Hostages,” the same ugly prejudice that forced an elderly piano teacher to flee the Nazi menace appears in a tormenting little girl. Although her mother compassionately arranges to hire the new citizen, the child resents the decision by crying out, “Spare your sympathy for the poor reffos!” (p. 239). In the end, the child mourns the defeat of her innocent victim and their “shared fate.”

This final section admirably probes into the psyche of the Australasian Jew as survivor. One wishes that the anthology could take the next step and illuminate the concerns and aspirations of the Australasian Jew today, but perhaps that chapter is not yet written.

Despite the annoying different typefaces which give the book a distinctly amateurish appearance, *Jewish Writing Down Under* gives us unique historical, literary, and sociological perspectives on two of the most isolated, yet fascinating Jewish communities in existence today.

—Eliot J. Baskin

Eliot J. Baskin is the rabbi at B’nai Israel Synagogue, Rochester, Minnesota. He has lived in and worked with both the Australian and the New Zealand Jewish communities.

This splendid study carefully chronicles the multifaceted career of a prominent Pittsburgh Jewish industrial leader. Consisting of five topically arranged chapters, this fascinating biography concentrates on three realms of Frank’s life: his industrial achievements, his civic leadership, and his commitment to Pittsburgh Jewry and his family. The book is based on extensive primary sources from family papers and from business records. Its chapters are extremely well organized and vividly portray the life of Frank within the context of his beloved Pittsburgh.

Two major chapters focus on the family, boyhood, and early engineering career of Frank. The book contains interesting and detailed accounts concerning the settlement and business activities of the Frank family in the Pittsburgh vicinity. Krause well recounts how William Frank (the father of Isaac) came to America, peddled dry goods throughout western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio, and in 1843 married Pauline Wormser. Four years later, the Franks settled in Pittsburgh. There are fine sections regarding William’s success in the glass industry and his role in the newly established Rodef Shalom Congregation. Considerable attention, too, is devoted to the rearing and schooling of Isaac—the fifth of the Frank children. Isaac Frank, who was born in 1855, graduated from Newell Institute, briefly attended Western University of Pennsylvania, and received his civil engineering degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1876. The author persuasively describes the activities and behavior of the enterprising Frank: his work experiences with the Keystone Bridge Company and the J. L. Lewis Company, the meticulous mechanical drawings in his leather notebook, his marriage to Tinnie Klee in June of 1883, his investments and loans found in his detailed business ledger, and his qualities of astuteness and decisiveness in the creation of the Frank-Kneeland Machine Company.
There are perceptive chapters relating to Frank's industrial and civic accomplishments. Motivated by the slogan "It Can Be Done," Frank did many worthy things for Pittsburgh. The author demonstrates that the belief in merger for profit was at the core of Frank's business strategy. He succeeded in consolidating four companies in 1901 into United Engineering and Foundry Company. With Frank as its president until 1919, United became a leader in the production of rolling mills, heavy castings, and forging presses. Moreover, Frank offered health insurance and profit incentive programs to United's employees and took a vehement stand against producing "machinery for destruction" after the start of World War I. Subsequently Frank played a central role in the creation of the Weirton Steel Company. He provided Weir with assistance in finding investors for the company, helped to determine the site of the mill in Hancock County, and offered suggestions as to how the new steel town should be laid out. The author, as well, presents an illuminating account of Frank's contributions to Pittsburgh. He was active in the Red Cross and in the Pittsburgh Association for the Improvement of the Poor. More importantly, Frank assumed a major part in raising funds for the building of the Cathedral of Learning at the University of Pittsburgh.

There is extensive treatment of Frank's involvement in Pittsburgh Jewry. He indeed was endowed with the spirit of philanthropy. He served for approximately thirty years as a director of the Gusky Hebrew Home and Orphanage. For almost twenty years, he was vice-president of both the Montefiore Hospital and the Irene Kaufmann Settlement. Frank served on the board of directors of the Young Men and Women's Hebrew Association. In 1912, he helped to organize the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies in Pittsburgh. The dedicated and energetic Frank actively participated in the affairs of Congregation Rodef Shalom, serving as a trustee from 1902 until 1930 and on many of its major committees.

This biography is impressive and masterfully done. The book is lucidly written, and its themes are cogently explained. The biography is skillfully researched and reveals the author's complete mastery of her subject. Moreover, Krause suggests much about Jews of German extraction in the Pittsburgh setting. The book contains an extensive bibliography and index, but regretfully lacks footnotes. Nevertheless, this substantive work is a significant contribution to the history of
American business and Jewry. —R. William Weisberger

R. William Weisberger teaches history at Butler County Community College, Butler, Pennsylvania.

Despite the obscenity of the saying "There's no business like Shoah business," there is no doubt, as Alan Berger states in this important work, that an increasing number of novels and short stories in this country are being written about the consequences and implications of the Holocaust for contemporary Judaism.

Berger therefore feels, and writes in a somewhat extraordinary sentence, that "what American Jewish novelists write and say and think about the Holocaust will . . . have a greater impact on American Judaism than that of any other group of American Jews in determining Jewish attitudes not only toward the catastrophe but toward the Jewish past as well as towards the future." A chorus of no's will undoubtedly emerge challenging this presumption, led by historians, theologians, and survivors. Indeed, the brilliant novelist Cynthia Ozick has already warned her profession that "the task . . . is to retrieve the Holocaust freight car by freight car, town by town, road by road, document by document. The task is to save it from becoming literature." And, she might have added, saving it from the realm of literary imagination.

Yet Berger deserves high marks for his assertiveness, and indeed, bravery. But this is not what makes his book the important contribution that it is. Instead it is Berger's contention that only by exploring post-Holocaust literary responses to covenantal Judaism can we best understand, indeed create, what Alvin Rosenfeld has described as a "phenomenology of reading Holocaust literature . . . a series of maps that will guide us on our way as we . . . try to comprehend the writings of . . . those who were never there but know more than the outlines of the place."

Some of those writers who know more than the outlines and are analyzed by Berger include Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth, I. B. Singer, Arthur Cohen, Elie Wiesel, and Cynthia Ozick.

How the Holocaust has affected this most normative element in Judaism—the inseparability of history and theology as reflected in the covenantal affirmation between man and God—is indeed a genuine and important way to try and assess the role of the Holocaust in our lives as Jews yesterday, today, and tomorrow.


These are the memoirs of a veritable giant in the history of American Jewry. Rabbi Israel Goldstein (1896-1986) was a founder, a builder, and a sustainer. His half-century of involvement in American Jewish communal, educational, Zionist, philanthropic, religious, and interfaith endeavors had no match.

This is an important book. It is autobiography and history, narrative and analysis. We bemoan the fact that "American Jewry has no more giants," such as Stephen S. Wise, Jacob Schiff, Louis Marshall, Abba Hillel Silver, or Eliezer Silver. But we are wrong. Israel Goldstein was such a hero, and we are grateful that this memoir will allow us to understand just how important was his role in the modern history of American Jewry and the State of Israel.
Brief Notices


If women were perceived as the “fairer sex,” how was this perception translated into the institutions they inhabited and the physical environment in which those institutions were placed? This is the brilliantly stated problem which Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz seeks to understand in a most important volume that enriches both the social history of America and the history of its higher education.

The focus of this question is the highly elitist Seven Sisters colleges, and Horowitz demonstrates that the perceived role of women in American society was reflected in the architectural design of the various colleges.

Horowitz describes the policy toward Jewish students at Barnard and Sarah Lawrence. Barnard, whose founding was due in large part to a Sephardic Jewish woman, Annie Nathan Meyer, never had a formalized quota system, but distinguished between “aristocratic” German (and presumably Sephardic) women and “aggressive” Eastern European types. Sarah Lawrence at its founding, on the other hand, was interested in “barring students of foreign parents and Jews.”


There can never be enough picture albums devoted to the American Jewish experience. Fortunately, America’s large publishing houses share this opinion. That is why outstanding pictorial histories by Kenneth Libo, Allon Schoener, and Harriet Rochlin, among others, have graced our coffee tables and our reading habits over the past several years.

Seymour Kurtz’s beautifully printed volume is a welcome addition to the genre. But beyond many excellent photographs, Kurtz has given us a very competent narrative which is worth reading. This is not a scholarly history, but it has taste and touches upon much of what is important to the American Jewish experience.


For years, survivors of the Holocaust have claimed that they were let down by a world that did not care. “Where were the Americans, the British?” they ask, insisting that their martyred brothers and sisters could have been saved from the gas chambers and the ovens. We have often dismissed these attitudes as symptoms of genuine grief, a grief which could easily cloud illusion from reality.

Now Deborah E. Lipstadt, in her powerful book, Beyond Belief, has challenged our assumptions about the questions asked by the survivors. They were not, she claims, illusionary nor unrealistic. “During the 1930’s and 1940’s, America could have saved thousands and maybe even hundreds of thousands of Jews but did not do so . . . This is a terrible indictment.” Indeed it is. Lipstadt’s is perhaps the final nail in the coffin of the argument which states that we as Americans—either individuals or government—could have done little to prevent the destruction of six million Jewish lives. Recent books by David Wyman, Robert Ross, and Haim Genizi have provided similar indictments, but never as blunt, as direct, as Lipstadt’s.

Her focus is on the American press. What she finds is that our American journalistic community “rarely handled the persecution of the Jews . . . as an inherent expression of Nazism . . . This was to have important consequences for the interpretation and comprehension of the news of the persecution of European Jewry.”

Thus, what we did know about anti-Jewish outrages from 1933 to 1945 did not merge with
our knowledge of and focus on the Nazi menace. It was removed and relegated to page 18 of
the Chicago Tribune or the New York Times. If Poland was described in 1942 as “one vast
center for murdering Jews,” how important or believable was it when the news item was
placed next to a wedding announcement a dozen and a half pages from the front-page head-
lines? And if President Roosevelt, who knew the value of public opinion very well, saw the
news item on page 16 or 18 or 20, what importance did he give to it when he knew that Mr.
and Mrs. America would have little or no opinion about it?
Are we or our journalists any different today? There has always been a “saving remnant” in the
world of news coverage, as there was during the Holocaust, as there is today. They, as
Lipstadt describes them, symbolize the difference between “action and inaction, passion and
equanimitiy.” They provide the hope that follows despair.

Marrus, Michael R. The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century. New York:

We are a nation of immigrants. Jews in this country have always prided themselves on
being a part of that image. What Michael R. Marrus’ new and outstanding book makes clear,
perhaps for the first time, is how much our immigrant status has really played second fiddle
to our role as refugees (an entirely different phenomenon) and how that role has been part
and parcel of developments within international politics since the latter part of the nineteenth
century.

More importantly, Professor Marrus demonstrates that the American attitude of apathy
and amorality toward the plight of European Jewry under the Nazis was and is really a
gruesome but less than full image of a much larger picture of international nonconcern with
the plight of homeless refugees, and one which encompasses many different peoples and
religious groups.

Rischin, Moses, Edited and with an introduction by. Grandma Never Lived in America: The
pp.

When the Yiddish-language Forward announced that it would become a weekly after years
as a daily newspaper, many predicted the imminent passing of the “world’s greatest immi-
grant, socialist and Jewish newspaper.” Indeed, with this announcement, a flood of nostalgia
arose for the “good old days” of immigrant Jewish life. A picture was recreated of Yiddish-
speaking throngs in the Lower East Side of New York, fighting to give the Jewish worker a
fairer share of the American Dream.

Such an image tended to blot out the reality that under the Forward’s long-time editor,
Abraham Cahan, the essential purpose of the paper was not to prolong the pure, unadulterat-
ed Yiddishkeit of East European Jewish life, but to eliminate it and ultimately its most obvious
and available representative, the Yiddish language itself.

Abraham Cahan (1860-1951) was the product of his times. He boasted of being an “im-
portant American novelist” and “the best foreign language editor in the U.S.” And why not?
His boastfulness mirrored the years when America was “emerging as a world power” and
New York was its “epicenter.” Cahan had room to boast. He is credited with many firsts—the
first socialist speaker to deliver a speech in Yiddish, the author of a novel, The Rise of David
Levinsky, which has been called “the most remarkable contribution of an immigrant to the
American novel,” among others.
Brief Notices

Moses Rischin’s wonderful introduction to this volume places Cahan in an entirely new setting—much different than the one which has the Forward as its essential focus. Cahan is here described as the prototype of the “New Journalism” of the 1960’s, as symbolized by literary luminaries such as Tom Wolfe and Norman Mailer. Cahan’s journalistic style was a genre which, as Rischin sees it, “aimed to penetrate beneath surfaces, and to elaborate and extend reader sensibilities and perceptions.” This style was in sharp opposition to the dominant expression of the time, the “yellow journalism” of the Hearst and Pulitzer presses, which tended to “titillate and inflame” its American readership.

Cahan attempted to bridge the great gulf between the new immigrants and older Americans, between the Old World and the New, in the name of a “complex and deeply felt American world civilization.”

Cahan understood, was a part of, the multiethnic New York and America that was already an established fact for half a century but which, until Cahan, had produced no real interpreter for the American public. Cahan’s interpretation saw America caught in a new spirit of hyphenated Americanism, best celebrated through the common man and socialism. But to achieve this new ideal, both the immigrant and the native American had to change, to give up some things that no longer had a place. If it was the Yiddish language which blinded American Jews to their new America, then it would have to be sacrificed; if it was an exaggerated nationalism and Yankee Spirit which kept the native from participating fully in the new America, then those two traits had to disappear.

Most of Cahan’s writings on these subjects were to be found in the New York Commercial Advertiser between the years 1897 and 1903 plus assorted Sunday Supplements. They are reprinted in this volume along with eight original Cahan short stories—including the unforgettable “The Apostate of Chego-Chegg”—and five translations of Russian stories by Anton Chekov and others.

Moses Rischin is particularly well qualified to edit and introduce this volume. His classic work, The Promised City: New York Jews, 1870-1914, gives him an understanding, similar to Cahan’s, about a great people and a great city. It is not unfair to state that Professor Rischin’s forthcoming full-length biography of Cahan promises something rare for the modern historian, the creation of a second classic work.


Why is it that when the names of the so-called giants of modern American Jewish history are recited, it is not always a given that the name of Cyrus Adler (1863–1940) will be included? One reason may be that no full-scale biography exists, but still the sheer energy and level of achievement attributed to him certainly demand that he receive such a “giant” status. Adler was, after all, at one time or another the assistant secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, the president of Dropsie College and the Jewish Theological Seminary, as well as the Philadelphia Jewish Community, among other high-level positions of leadership in American Jewish life.

Professor Ira Robinson’s selection of nearly six hundred letters written by Adler begins to tell us more than we have ever known about Adler the achiever and participant in American Jewish life. Strengthened by Professor Naomi W. Cohen’s intelligent introduction, these volumes of letters will serve as an excellent “starter” on the road to the much fuller fare of an in-depth biography of Cyrus Adler the man and the “giant.”
How many Jewish jokes of another era has one heard that contain within them the punch line “after all, we are in Golos [exile]”? The essential message of Charles E. Silberman’s extraordinary book is that we are no longer in Golos either as American Jews or as American Judaism.

Nearly half a century ago, the great Jewish historian Salo Baron decried the Jewish fascination with lachrymosity, with suffering. The events of the Holocaust did nothing to allay the fears of many Jews, especially in Israel. But since 1945, the American Jewish community has seen itself become a full-fledged part of American society. There are so few social, economic, or political barriers left that most Jews do not even know what they might be.

It is ironic that Silberman’s previous books have dealt with crises in race relations, crime, and education. But the trilogy does not expand here. Instead, we are treated to a sophisticated and beautifully written analysis of why we are in a Jewish “Golden Age” in America, supported by sociological and demographic evidence from the works of Professors Steven M. Cohen and Calvin Goldscheider, among others. That analysis tells us that American Jews are here to stay and that their religious customs, beliefs, and institutions will be right behind them.

Should American Jews greet the dawn with unbridled enthusiasm, secure of their grandchildren’s place in the American dream? If we consider that question from the point of external acceptance and internal achievements—yes.

But if we consider the question from the point of view of the Jewish community in relation to itself, the answer assumes a much greater complexity, and a hint of pessimism may be detected on the horizon. The truth is that while we are secure as American Jews, we are not all so secure as Jews. This is embodied in what Rabbi Reuven Bulka has called “the coming cataclysm,” when a schism within the Jewish people over questions of personal status (patrilineal descent, religious conversion, and divorce) will force more traditional Jews to deny the Jewishness of hundreds of thousands of less traditional Jews.

Abba Eban once joked that “the Jews are a people that can’t take ‘yes’ for an answer.” Perhaps that is why Jews will always find a way of waking up with a slight sense of unease even if they have read A Certain People just before the long night of sleep.


In his introduction to this volume, Professor Alfred Gottschalk has written, “I know of no other memoir of the Holocaust which has searched so deeply for meaning, [and] which has subjected the author to such self-scrutiny.”

This is an indication of the kind of response which this sensitively written set of memoirs evokes from those who are fortunate enough to read it.

Werner Weinberg is, as he defines himself, “a survivor of the first degree,” one who survived the agonies of Bergen Belsen and whose tragedy stretched from the first days of the Nazi takeover to the end of World War II. Like many survivors, his ability to speak and write publicly about the event came after many years of self-imposed silence, motivated in part by the refusal of the world to believe what had happened and its inability to comprehend the consequences brought about by this “tremendum,” as Arthur Cohen has described the Holocaust.
Few survivors have exposed their own post-1945 thoughts, feelings, and questions as fully and as publicly as has Werner Weinberg. He questions the very roots of his religious beliefs as a Jew, the very nature of the so-called German-Jewish symbiosis, and the very nature of survival, both during and after the Holocaust. The answers must be read.

But Werner Weinberg's greatest contribution may lie beyond his literary achievement. It may lie in his willingness to confront the sons and daughters of the murderers, the new generation of Germans, “trying to help them overcome the burden of their past, even if he cannot, by the virtue of its enormity, overcome his own.”
1986
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Congregational and Community Records and Histories

Alaska. Minutes of meetings of the Jewish Congregation of Fairbanks, 1975, 1978–1979, plus articles of incorporation and the constitution and by-laws; issues of the *Alaskan Jewish Chronicle* and *Alaskan Jewish Bulletin*, 1962–1976 (scattered); and issues of the Jewish Congregation of Fairbanks Newsletter, 1972–1984 (scattered); *Typescript; Xerox copy*  
(Received from Mr. Michael Krauss, Fairbanks.)

Arkansas. Historical records survey of synagogues in the state, conducted by the Works Projects Administration, 1940–1941; *Manuscript and Typescript; Xerox copy*  
(Received from University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.)

Baltimore, Md. Reports of women's organizations, 1889–1893; *Typescript; Xerox copy*  
(Received from the Jewish Historical Society of Maryland.)

Boston, Mass. Records of Jewish student projects, including materials on the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation, Brandeis University, and activities of Rabbi Richard J. Israel, 1966–1985; *Manuscript and Typescript*  
(Received from Richard J. Israel.)

Boston, Mass., Temple Israel. Certificate of Confirmation for Arthur G. King, 1921, and program for the service; also photograph and program for Temple Israel confirmation class, 1923; *Manuscript and Typescript*  
(Received from Arthur G. King, Cincinnati.)

California. Historical records survey of synagogues in Northern California, conducted by the Works Projects Administration, 1936–1942; *Typescript; Xerox copy*  
(Received from the California State Archives, Sacramento.)

Cincinnati, Ohio. Questionnaires, correspondence, reports, and miscellaneous items concerning a survey of Jewish education in Cincinnati conducted by Dr. Jonathan D. Sarna, 1980–1984; *Typescript*  
(Received from Jonathan D. Sarna, Cincinnati.)

Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Temple Emanu-El. Minute book, 1937–1939; *Manuscript and Typescript; Xerox copy*  
(Received from Jeffrey L. Ballon, Fort Lauderdale.)

Georgia. Historical records survey of synagogues in the state, conducted by the Works Projects Administration, 1937–1942; *Typescript; Xerox copy*  
(Received from the Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.)

Illinois. Historical records survey of synagogues in the state, conducted by the Works Projects Administration, 1936–1942; *Manuscript and Typescript*  
(Received from Illinois State Archives, Springfield.)

St. Louis, Mo., Congregation B'nai El. Constitution and by-laws, 1876–1877; *Manuscript; Xerox copy*  
(Received from Mrs. Julian H. Miller, St. Louis.)
West Lafayette, Ind., Temple Israel. Board minutes, reports, temple bulletins, and miscellaneous records, 1973-1982; Typescript and Manuscript; Microfilm
(Received from Temple Israel.)

Records and Papers of Societies and Institutions
National Association of Temple Administrators. Minutes, correspondence, and reports of the organization, 1967-1984; Manuscript and Typescript; Xerox copy
(Received from Norman Fogel, Los Angeles, Cal.)
National Association of Temple Secretaries. Proceedings of Conventions and Institutes, 1941-1956; Summary of Convention Proceedings, 1943-1956; Reports of Presidents, 1943-1956; Minutes of Executive Board, 1944-1956; and NAIS archives, 1941-1956; Typescript; Microfilm

Letters and Papers
Anger, Moses and Marcus; New York, N.Y. Writings, photographs, clippings, and miscellaneous items, 1900-1930; Manuscript and Typescript
(Received from Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Goldsmith, New York.)
Bloom, Jacob E.; Cincinnati. Correspondence and documents on the military and civil careers of Bloom, a graduate of the United States Military Academy, and the first president of Cincinnati Milicron, 1886-1983; Manuscript and Typescript; Xerox copy
(Received from James W. Clasper, Cincinnati.)
Braude, William G.; Providence, R.I. Correspondence of Chiene Rachel Braude with family members, including with her son, Rabbi Braude, 1923-1970; family genealogy; and brief biography of Yizhak Aisik Braude, written by his son, 1984; Manuscript and Typescript; English and Yiddish; Original and Xerox copies
(Received from William G. Braude.)
Davids, Stanley M.; Worcester, Mass. Letter to Dr. Jacob R. Marcus containing family news and activities, 1984; Typescript; Xerox copy
(Received from Stanley M. Davids.)
Enelow, Hyman G.; New York, N.Y. Correspondence, sermons, and miscellaneous papers, 1898-1934; Manuscript and Typescript; Microfilm
Goldman, Solomon; Chicago, Ill. Correspondence, sermons, writings, and personal items concerning Solomon's work as a rabbi, author, and president of the Zionist Organization of America, 1923-1955; Manuscript and Typescript; English and Hebrew
(Received from Naomi Zemel, Chicago.)
Good Family; Wheeling, W.Va. Letters, photographs, and newsclippings concerning Lee S. Good, Sidney S. Good, Samuel L. Good, and other family members, 1883-1976, and family tree of the Hanauer Family, 1813-1973, plus a biography of Sam Hanauer, a butcher in Morristown, Ohio; Manuscript and Typescript; Xerox copies
(Received from Laurance F. Good, Wheeling.)
Gottschalk, Alfred; Cincinnati. Correspondence with political and religious leaders, 1957-1985; ceremonial copy of President Jimmy Carter's proclamation in honor of the Days of Remembrance of victims of the Holocaust, given in appreciation of Dr. Gottschalk's participation in the Remembrance Service, 1979; and letters from President Ronald Reagan on the 100th anniversary of the first rabbinic class at the Hebrew Union College, 1983; and thanking Dr. Gottschalk for his participation in the president's second inauguration, 1985; Typescript; Original and Xerox copies
(Received from Alfred Gottschalk.)
Hart, George; South Carolina. Letter to his mother, Esther, in Portsmouth, England, describing his life and activities in South Carolina, 1817; Manuscript
(Taken from the Bertram W. Korn Papers housed at the American Jewish Archives.)

Holtzmann, Fanny E.; New York, N.Y. Microfilm copy of American Jewish Archives Manuscript Collection No. 84, describing the career of Miss Holtzmann, lawyer and friend to celebrities and nobility. The collection includes correspondence, newscaps, legal materials, photographs, awards, and miscellaneous items, 1920–1980; Manuscript and Typescript; English, French, and German; Restricted

Lasky, Moses; San Francisco, Calif. Letters between Lasky and his grandnephew, following the grandnephew’s joining with the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, 1972–1974; Typescript and Manuscript; Xerox copies
(Received from Moses Lasky.)

Levine, Daniel B., Fayetteville, Ark. Letter to the president of the University of Arkansas from Professor Levine, protesting the university’s allowing preaching during halftime of a basketball game, 1984; Typescript; Xerox copy
(Received from Daniel B. Levine.)

Schwartz, Julie S.; Cincinnati. Letter from the Jewish Welfare Board’s Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy certifying that Schwartz is a chaplain, 1984; Typescript; Xerox copy
(Received from Steven A. Ballaban, Cincinnati.)

Autobiographies, Biographies, Diaries, and Memoirs

Binswanger, Augustus; St. Louis, Mo. Diary, 1868–1872; letterbook, 1863–1866; book of writings, 1856–1859; scrapbooks, 1868–1883; and miscellaneous, 1861–1933, concerning his law career in St. Louis and Chicago, Illinois, and his involvement with Congregation Shaare Emeth, St. Louis; Manuscript and Typescript
(Received from Louis E. Westheimer, St. Louis.)

Braiterman, William; Baltimore, Md. “Memories of the Palestine Jewish Legion of 1917,” by Braiterman, plus an oral history interview and clippings concerning the Jewish Legion, 1967–1981; Typescript; Xerox copy
(Received from William Braiterman, Henniker, N.H.)

(Received from Sheldon H. Blank, Cincinnati.)

Einstein, Sol; Cincinnati. Biographical sketch found in the unpublished manuscript of the Cincinnati Milacron Centennial history, 1985; Typescript; Xerox copy
(Received from James W. Clasper, Cincinnati.)

Friedman, Benjamin; Miami Beach, Fla. Document containing reminiscences of his chaplaincy service during World War I, including recollections of other Jewish chaplains, 1985; Manuscript
(Received from Benjamin Friedman.)

Gamoran Family; Palatine, Ill. “A Family History,” by Mamie G. Gamoran, 1985; Typescript; Xerox copy
(Received from Hillel Gamoran, Hoffman Estates, Ill.)

Gordon, George Jacob; Minneapolis, Minn. Biographical sketch, written by his son, Rabbi Theodore H. Gordon, 1985; Typescript; Xerox copy
(Received from Theodore H. Gordon, Media, Pa.)
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Koppman, Lionel; Jackson Heights, N.Y. Memoir, "What I Remember," recalling his life in Waco, Texas, and his association with Congregation Agudath Jacob, 1985; Manuscript; Xerox copy
(Received from Lionel Koppman.)

(Received from Alfred Gottschalk.)

Genealogies

(Received from Richard and Lois England, Washington.)

Koshland Family; San Francisco, Cal. Family tree, 1755–1985; Typescript and Manuscript; English and German; Xerox copy
(Received from Walter S. Hertzmann, Portola Valley, Calif.)

Oral History


Frankfurter, Felix; Washington, D.C. Oral history interview conducted by Charles McLaughlin for the John F Kennedy Library, 1964; Typescript; Xerox copy

Glueck, Helen I.; Cincinnati. Tape recording and transcript of an oral history interview conducted by Dr. Richard E. Wolf, 1984; Tape Recording and Typescript

Hexter, Maurice; New York. Oral history interview, conducted as part of the Oral History Project of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, containing reminiscences concerning personal life and involvement in the work of the Federation, 1981; Typescript; Restricted
(Received from the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York.)

Miami, Fla. Tape records of interviews with numerous individuals regarding various aspects of Jewish life in Dade County, 1904–1984; Tape Recording
(Received from Seymour B. Liebman, Miami.)

National Council of Jewish Women, Cincinnati Section. Tape recordings and transcripts of interviews conducted by the Council, as part of its oral history project, "Survivors of Hitler's Germany in Cincinnati, 1981"; Tape Recording and Typescript; Restricted
(Received from National Council of Jewish Women, Cincinnati.)

Theses


Allen, Michael Mitchell; Philadelphia. Items concerning Allen, a chaplain in the Union Army during the Civil War, and his family, including wills, passports, correspondence, articles, photographs, and newscuttings, 1852–1965; Manuscript and Typescript
(Received from W. Allen Levy, San Francisco.)

Blumkin, Rose; Omaha, Neb. Materials on Mrs. Blumkin and her family business, the Nebraska Furniture Mart, 1949–1984; Typescript and Manuscript; Original and Xerox copies
(Received from Sidney Brooks, Omaha.)

Cook, Michael J.; Cincinnati. Workshop and Lecture, “Spiritual Future for Our Grandchildren,” n.d.; Tape Recording

Da Costa, Isaac; Charleston, S.C. Document concerning a debt settlement involving Da Costa, 1810; Manuscript; Xerox copy
(Received from Malcolm H. Stern, New York.)

De Leon, Abraham; Charleston, S.C. Medical bill, for visits and medicine administered to one of De Leon’s patients, 1818; Manuscript
(Taken from the Bertram W. Korn Papers.)


Ezekiel, Jacob; Richmond, Va. Memorial Book, 1834–1836; Typescript; English and Hebrew; Xerox copy
(Received from Ida Cohen Selavan, Cincinnati.)

Falbel, Nachman; São Paulo, Brazil. “The Beginnings of Zionism in Brazil,” written by Falbel, 1984; Typescript; Xerox copy
(Received from Nachman Falbel.)

Federação Israelite do Estads do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Listing of all the names and addresses of the member organizations of FIERJ, n.d.; Typescript; Spanish; Xerox copy
(Received from Clifford M. Kulwin, Rio de Janeiro.)

Goldman, Edward A.; Cincinnati. Lecture, “Towards a Golden Age of Jewish Creativity in America,” n.d.; Tape Recording

(Received from Lawrence D. Geller, New York.)

Levy, Benjamin; Philadelphia, Pa. Colonial seven-dollar note bearing the signature of Levy, 1776; Manuscript; Xerox copy

Peck, Abby; Cincinnati. “The Survivor,” a reminiscence of her grandfather, Sol, a survivor of the Holocaust, 1985; Typescript; Xerox copy

Simons, Leonard N., Detroit, Mich. Introductory remarks at a meeting of the Detroit Historical Society, 1985; Typescript; Xerox copy
(Received from Leonard N. Simons.)

Sterne, Adolphus; Texas. Judicial order, issued by Sterne, demanding property be confiscated as settlement concerning an unpaid debt, 1836; Manuscript
(Taken from the Bertram W. Korn Papers.)

Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Reports and minutes of the Union’s Day School Committee, 1983–1985; Typescript and Manuscript; Xerox copy
(Received from Samuel K. Joseph, Cincinnati.)

Yulee, David Levy; Washington, D.C. Report from the Committee of Elections concerning attempts to prevent Yulee from holding a seat in the United States House of Representatives,
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1841; speech on the Army Appropriation Bill, delivered to the United States House of Representatives, 1842; speech on the tenth article of the Treaty of Washington, and certain fugitive criminals from Florida, 1844; and letter stating he will contest the election for the U.S. Senate seat from Florida, declared to have been won by Stephen R. Mallory, 1851; Typescript

(Taken from the Bertram W. Korn Papers.)
In a unique and richly informative addition to American educational, religious, and cultural history, Dan Oren examines the college life of Jews at Yale from the first Jewish graduate in 1809 to the present time, drawing comparisons to the Jewish experience at other elite colleges and universities and to the experiences of other minorities at Yale.

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