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# Review Essay

## Jewish Communal History in an Ethnic Context

William Toll

Gelin, James A. *Starting Over: The Formation of the Jewish Community of Springfield, Massachusetts, 1840–1905*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1984. ix, 161 pp., appendices, bibliography, index.

Smith, Judith E. *Family Connections: A History of Italian and Jewish Immigrant Lives in Providence, Rhode Island, 1900–1940*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985. xii, 228 pp., index.

Klayman, Richard. *The First Jew: Prejudice and Politics in an American Community, 1900–1932*. Melrose, Mass.: Old Suffolk Square Press, 1985. xii, 175 pp., bibliography, index.

The writing of American Jewish communal history has usually been aimed as much at laymen as at scholars. Because American Jews have moved so far geographically, economically, and politically from their immigrant ancestors, their historians have attempted to satisfy the curiosity of the children about their immediate predecessors. It is equally plausible that Judaism has required a contact between generations that scholars raised in an ethnically intensive setting have felt a need to fulfill. The best traditional communal histories, like those of Hyman Grinstein for New York, Stuart Rosenberg for Rochester, and Lloyd Gartner and associates for Milwaukee, Los Angeles, and Cleveland, have explained who the immigrants were, how they settled in, what institutions they built, and how they accommodated to a minority status. Perhaps because religious institutions kept more readily accessible records, or because prayer and ritual continued to link the generations after the cultural baggage of European languages and customs had lost its appeal, communal historians saw religion as a central theme providing intergenerational continuity. More recent studies of Richmond by Rabbi Myrton Berman, of Indianapolis by Judith En-

delman, and of Congregation Emanu-El of San Francisco by Fred Rosenbaum have combined a meticulous sifting of archival records with a deep love of the Jewish people to produce excellent scholarly volumes with a wide lay appeal. But these volumes generally isolate patterns of social change within the Jewish community from broad economic and political events affecting other Americans in different ways. In their desire to link generations they suggest that certain changes are unique to Jews or that individuals are motivated by a sense of Jewishness when they have vital social and other contacts elsewhere.

Since the mid-1960's, however, scholars trained at major universities have either raised different questions or turned to different kinds of data to broaden or correct our understanding of old issues. In conjunction with a new scholarly attention to the poor or semiliterate, Jewish scholars have tried to democratize their research by gathering and correlating data about persons who left little "literary" evidence. And in response to a rewriting of ethnic history in general, they have tried to link patterns of change within Jewish communities to similar—if differently paced—patterns in other ethnic enclaves. The best products of this scholarship, like Jeff Gurock's study of Jewish Harlem, Steven Hertzberg's study of Atlanta, or Thomas Kessner's comparative analysis of mobility among Jews and Italians in New York City, have turned to federal and state manuscript census data, tax rolls and property records, and city directories to compare Jewish *rates* of mobility, patterns of migration, and rationales for change with those of other groups. The changing place of Jews in the American social landscape, as well as the broadening of the scope of Jewish history beyond New York which these books, and that of Marc Raphael for Columbus, Ohio, provide, is now more clearly documented through innovative methods respected by the general scholarly community.

Questions about the purpose, focus, and ultimate uses of these books remain. Most of the older communal histories, for example, defined the origin of a community by identifying its earliest settlers, and brought the story of institutional growth quite close to the present. From such a focus laymen could understand how their community had assumed its current proportions and institutional structure. The newer studies, however, often delimit specific blocks of time

and concentrate on a set of questions most germane to their authors' professional disciplines. They are most concerned with demonstrating how local social patterns are related to larger national trends within and often beyond the Jewish community. Occasionally, in their desire to explore particular theories of social change, they omit details or even institutions to which local survivors have looked as vital links to their own past.

Of the three books under review here, one provides much detail within a narrow context to satisfy *some* survivors, while two use more innovative and comparative methods to address issues of interest to the writers' professional colleagues. All of the books examine enclaves in New England and thus add information about a region to which Jews—and Jewish scholarship—have come rather late. With the collapse of the Newport Jewish settlement after the American Revolution, Jews generally avoided New England, allegedly because the Puritans and their descendants had discouraged Jews—and other groups—from settling in the towns around which the regional economy was built. Gelin and Klayman accept this notion without exploring alternative theories: for example, that New England had become economically stagnant compared to other regions, and that major rail and water routes from the port of entry in New York led immigrants intent on commercial careers to the Midwest. Gelin's study of Springfield, Massachusetts, the most traditional in selection of themes and use of data, simply notes the handful of German Jews filtering through prior to 1880, and uses city directories to demonstrate how they resided among the German ethnic element. Though Springfield had industrial plants (including a major federal arsenal) and an Irish and French Canadian proletariat, German Jewish merchants rarely stayed to serve their needs. Those who did Gelin traces through city directories, though why he did not consult the federal manuscript census to recreate household structures is not discussed. Within his methodological limitations, Gelin carefully explains the development of Springfield's economy, its rapid growth during the Civil War around the arsenal and its continuing importance as a machine tool center, and the ultimate arrival of Polish and East European settlers in the 1880's to create small retail establishments. By 1905, Jews were about 3.5 percent of the total population of 73,000, and they clustered in an older district of small one-, two-, or three-family homes which they pur-

chased from Irish owners moving to newer, more affluent districts. Drawing largely on newspaper accounts and some interviews, he reconstructs the pattern of familial arrival, the founding of small businesses, synagogues, and mutual benefit societies just north of the railroad station around which the community clustered. Because he has relied on obsolete secondary sources for his understanding of Eastern European Jewry, and because he assumes that Jews came directly from *shtetls* to Springfield, he interprets the mutual benefit societies as extensions of traditional cultures. (Judith Smith sees them very differently.) For Gelin, as Jews replaced the Irish, and did not compete with them in any way, the resettlement and effort to recreate European social patterns seemed placid. It is a pattern which readers of traditional communal histories will find familiar, perhaps too familiar.

Judith Smith's study of Providence, Rhode Island, also focuses on emigration, resettlement, and communal living, but she brings the methods and questions of professional scholarship to her work. Rather than recounting the exploits of individuals, she sees people primarily as parts of families, which must collectively innovate to survive. For her, ethnicity, certainly religious interests, are subordinate to the personal bonds between the generations, mates, and siblings that allow individuals to move from one social setting to another. Where Gelin emphasizes the special Jewish emphasis on "persecution" to explain emigration, Smith, drawing on wider sources, emphasizes the rise of factory production and the spread of the commercial "market" to both South Italy and Eastern Europe to explain the bulk of both Italian and Jewish emigration. Where Gelin emphasizes the stark differences between the *shtetl* and modern American cities, Smith presents a more complex picture of change. Drawing largely on the writings of Josef Barton, Ezra Mendelsohn, John Briggs, and others, she notes that the majority of Jews had by the 1890's left *shtetls* for larger cities like Bialystok or Minsk, and many Sicilian and South Italian farm families had some members working in cities prior to emigration to the United States. Europe itself was no longer static or "traditional," and the trades or varied work the immigrant men performed in America resembled what they had done in Europe. "Both the old country and the new world were societies in flux, and the focus of these recent studies has shifted to the immigrants themselves as actors in the transforma-

tion," Smith says (p. 5).

Of course, Smith's major thematic innovation is to compare Italian with Jewish immigrants to determine whether the same process of readjustment marked both groups. Her focus is not really on Italians or Jews, but on the process of resettlement. Providence is much larger than Springfield and held in 1915 more than 20,000 Italians (14 percent of the population), and more than 8,000 East European Jews (6 percent), residing in densely settled, ethnically homogeneous neighborhoods. For intensive analysis of the "process" of resettlement, she has selected from the 1915 state manuscript census 172 Italian and 72 Jewish families residing next to each other in the centers of their respective neighborhoods. She traces all family members back to their European places of origin, where possible, and traces them forward through city directories to determine occupational and residential changes through 1940. For Smith, women and children as much as men contributed to the family economy, and emigration itself was merely a strategy to solve the economic problems of the entire family. Childhood was a time to learn to work, and wives were expected to contribute to family resources by taking work into the home. In Providence Jewish and Italian women took needlework into their homes or used their home to shelter boarders, as families sought resources to compensate for the "butter and eggs" resources they had counted on in Europe. For the immigrant generation, neighbors and collateral kin took the place of the immediate family which had supported young couples in Europe. And mutual benefit societies were adapted from their European functions to support truncated families. They had been *innovative* in European cities and towns, and they continued to be so in America, where families needed kin and neighbors to help meet their need for insurance and small bits of venture capital. By the 1920's, however, both the Jewish and Italian benefit societies declined, Smith argues, because families were recovering from the dislocations of migration; and as the local economy's employment structure shifted to higher-paying service and professional work, the sons and daughters of immigrants found more remunerative employment, which in turn made newly constituted families more self-sufficient. The depression of the 1930's led many sons and daughters to delay marriage and to reside with aging parents, but those who were working were able to greatly augment family income. And national insur-

ance companies could meet family needs. By 1940, Smith says, Jewish and Italian families had recovered from immigration, despite the lower occupational status of the Italians, and they resembled one another in structure and function. For members, the sense of identity had shifted from shared kinship and work networks to a wider sense of nationalistic ethnicity “that might serve as an alternative to class identity” (p. 159).

In her zeal to emphasize the resiliency of the family and the capacity of kin and neighbors in America to shift support functions and then to relinquish them, Smith often loses interest in the possibility that Jewish and Italian families might *differ* significantly in their strategies for survival *and for change*. Aside from the possibility that her sample might be too small to represent a spectrum of immigrant experiences, she seems intent on showing that the family strategies were identical because economic pressures were very similar. She sees the key issue as the inadequacy of the patriarchal family to meet the challenge of new factory forms of production, and the solution she sees in the resourcefulness of women and children in helping to create new family lives in America. Nevertheless, she ignores scholarship which indicates that Italian families, for example, had much higher rates of boarders and much longer periods of separation than did Jewish families, or that Jews far more often saw intergenerational mobility through education while Italians more frequently saw security in home ownership. Indeed, her data do show that sons and to some degree daughters followed their parents into blue- or white-collar work, but that Italians had a much smaller entrepreneurial and subsequently white-collar contingent. Although her findings largely corroborate those of Goldstein and Goldscheider for Providence Jewry, she rejects their cultural explanations for change. Instead, she emphasizes economic structure and individual initiative. And she completely omits any discussion of the possible existence of a German Jewry in the city prior to the arrival of the East Europeans and the possibility that they may have created institutions to ease the adjustment of newcomers. Nor does she suggest *why* families might develop an “ethnic” sense of identity as an alternative to class. In most respects, however, Smith provides a far more sophisticated view of how families assumed responsibility for their own readjustment, and how the second generation reconstituted family ties to make the patterns of their immigrant parents obsolete.

For Smith this meant the reassertion of nuclear family responsibility. But because she ignores the cultural side of becoming American, she leaves the reader unable to understand how or why Jewish and probably Italian families underwent yet another internal revolution by the 1970's. While lay readers will find little about individual families, those with patience will learn an enormous amount about how patterns of social adjustment shaped the daily lives of ordinary immigrants.

Scholars and lay readers will find far less to hold their attention in Richard Klayman's study of Malden, Massachusetts, Jewry. Like Smith, Klayman addresses an issue of special interest to scholars—whether immigrants contributed to or opposed Progressive reform. Inspired by the arguments of Joseph Hutmacher, Klayman gathered election returns for a predominantly Irish ward from 1900 to 1932, and discovered that the Jews generally supported Republicans, while the Irish supported Democrats. In addition, though, he found that Jews far more than the Irish voters split their tickets, from which he infers that Jews were more “discerning,” because they voted on the basis of their ideological commitment to “reform.” In an additional corrective to a prior scholarly argument, he found that Jews did not suddenly shift to the Democrats under the influence of Al Smith's candidacy in 1928. Instead, they gradually during the 1920's shifted to the Democrats, because the Republicans offered candidates like Calvin Coolidge who disdained Jews.

Klayman sketches the development of both the Jewish and Irish populations of their respective wards, demonstrating, as in Springfield, that the Jews were primarily peddlers and small businessmen and artisans, while the Irish worked in industrial plants. As in Springfield, Jews and Irish were not in conflict over jobs or territory, though a rampaging gang of Irish toughs one Sunday evening in 1911 destroyed property and injured many Jews in the Jewish business district. The local magistrate allowed most of them off, and the incident poisoned relations between the groups for a generation. The Irish voters, however, controlled the local civil service, through which its aspiring individuals sought social mobility, while the Protestant owners, managers, and professionals controlled the Republican Party. Neither party pursued the Jewish vote despite the growing proportion of Jews in the district. When aspiring Jewish lawyers and others sought political ad-

vancement, they identified with the Republicans. According to Klayman, they found in local Republicanism a model of civic honesty, efficient government, and boosterism which they saw as "progressive."

Regrettably, Klayman skews the relationship between voting patterns and political ideals in three ways. First, as he knows, Republicanism in Massachusetts was not in the vanguard of Progressivism, and Malden is simply a poor locale to try to verify theories about immigrant attachment to "reform." The individuals on whom he does settle to demonstrate "progressive" Jewish thinking were simply local boosters. Second, Jews, facing resistance from both parties, were no more "discerning" in splitting their tickets than were the Irish for consistently supporting the Democratic Party, which after all guaranteed their own social advancement. Third, an analysis of voting behavior, where neither party sought or rewarded Jews, and where no "Jewish issues" were politicized, hardly explains the political interests or consciousness of Jews. Most Jewish energy and attention was focused on the struggle for power within the ethnic community, as it expanded in size and influence in Malden. Those aspiring Jewish lawyers or businessmen who had political ambitions in the 1920's (none of whom are named) would have built their base, there as elsewhere, through local Jewish lodges or fundraising efforts so they might have a constituency to deliver to the major parties. Far too many of Klayman's conclusions, despite his neat graphs of voting behavior, rest on inference rather than data. All readers will find Klayman's description of the Irish as well as the Jewish districts fascinating because of the wealth of detail and the dramatic contrasts. But his political arguments are not convincing or consistent.

The appearance of these three books helps us appreciate the adjustment of Jews to New England cities, but only Smith's adds a new theoretical dimension to our understanding of how families coped with resettlement. Klayman and Gelin provide very useful contrasts with the Irish, the major immigrant group in the region, while Smith helps us appreciate that Jewish families used coping strategies that were similar to—though, I would emphasize, not identical with—those used by the Italians. Because of her work, no future community studies can slight the intensive relationship between family, neighborhood institutions, and workplace, nor the role of women in the rede-

ployment of family resources. She has moved us another step along the way to writing Jewish history with a comparative eye. From her, and others, we may better appreciate the collective strategies as well as the communal leaders who have helped us reach this day.

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## Book Reviews

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Oren, Dan A. *Joining the Club: A History of Jews and Yale*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985. xiv, 440 pp.

On December 15, 1933, the *American Hebrew and Jewish Tribune* (p. 93) optimistically proclaimed: "From the outset, American colleges have developed along lines apart from the hidebound university barriers of Europe. Caste and creed have always earmarked the student body of educational institutions abroad. . . . Not so here, in the free air of America. With slight deviations from the norm, American college life has been what it should be—a foregathering of youth in the commonalty of culture." Despite occasional incidents of "downright prejudice" at some campuses, a young Jewish man or woman was free "to win collegiate acceptance on his or her merit—whether under the professorial eye or in the companionships of college life." Recent research has proven, however, that this was not true at elite eastern private colleges and at professional schools from World War I until the late 1940's and at some institutions, like Yale, until the early 1960's.

To the history of academic anti-Semitism, previously documented at Columbia University by Harold S. Wechsler's *The Qualified Student* (1977) and at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton by Marcia G. Synnott's *The Half-Opened Door* (1979), Dan A. Oren's *Joining the Club* adds important corroboration on Yale's informal 10 percent Jewish quota from its adoption in 1924 until its relinquishment between 1960 and 1962. His chapter on "The Limitation of Numbers: Undergraduate Admissions between the World Wars," which closely parallels Synnott's chapter on "Yale: Reaction and Stabilization, 1900s to 1940s," shows that Yale and its alumni considered discrimination against Jews and other minorities acceptable in order to protect the traditional clientele of White Anglo-Saxon Protestants from too much

competition. Oren, a 1979 graduate of Yale College, was told by R. Inslee Clark that, as late as 1961, “anti-Semitism, and anti-black, and anti-Hispanic bias was blatant” among some of the admissions staff (p. 200). Yale then had a lower percentage of Jewish students (12) than Columbia (45), Cornell (26), the University of Pennsylvania (25), and Harvard (21) (p. 196).

In response to criticisms by Yale’s Jewish alumni and by Hillel director Rabbi Richard J. Israel, President A. Whitney Griswold personally committed himself, on April 5, 1960, to ensuring admission of “students of the proper qualities whether they were Jews or non-Jews” (p. 192). University chaplain William Sloane Coffin, Jr., suggested a more religiously diversified admissions staff, while the (Professor Leonard W.) “Doob Report” of April 13, 1962, recommended a larger faculty role in admissions and that intellect be given greater weight in selecting freshmen. In 1963, Yale became accessible to financially disadvantaged students with the adoption of a “need-blind” admissions policy. Supported by President Kingman Brewster, Jr., Dean of Admissions (1965–1970) Clark selected students who were highly motivated, intellectually able, and diverse by requiring prep school applicants to compete on equal terms, by recruiting at inner-city high schools, and by reducing alumni “breaks” to one. Enrolling 172 Jews (16 percent), the class of 1966 ended the quota; by the 1970’s, about one-third of the students were Jews. Black applications quadrupled; and in 1969 Yale admitted women as undergraduates (pp. 201–214, 320–321).

Despite a mass of factual details and lengthy quotations from memoranda and correspondence, Oren does not systematically place Yale in the larger context of the history of selective college-admissions policies and of quotas. His claim that “the Limitation of Numbers plan implemented at Yale in 1923 set the pattern that Harvard and others subsequently followed” (p. 63) slights developments at other colleges that caused Yale in May 1922 to consider ways of keeping itself from being inundated by Jews barred elsewhere. After 1919, Columbia sharply cut Jewish enrollment among undergraduates (from 40 to 22 percent) and medical students (from about 50 percent to 18–20 percent). In March 1922, President A. Lawrence Lowell bluntly urged a 15 percent Jewish quota at Harvard; he achieved it by 1926. Both Dartmouth in 1919 (described in David O. Levine’s forthcoming book) and Princeton in January 1922 preceded Yale in limiting under-

graduate enrollment and developing "selective admission" policies.

Oren cites Stephen Steinberg that quotas at elite eastern colleges "did not constitute a major obstacle to Jewish aspirations" (p. 63), although the sociologist also admitted that "it is not possible to determine precisely how prevalent quotas were during the 1920's" (*Commentary*, September 1971, p. 72). In fact, the "selective," anti-Semitic admissions policies of Ivy League and Seven Sister colleges influenced another 700 or so liberal arts colleges to restrict or discourage Jewish enrollment. In "Anti-Semitism and American Universities," published in David A. Gerber's *Anti-Semitism in American History* (1986), Synnott contends that, despite significant institutional and regional variations, quotas did follow Jews across the country in both private liberal arts colleges and in medical, dental, and law schools. Oren's two chapters on the Yale Medical School and its quota might have emphasized the depression era demands by some medical societies for a limit on Jewish physicians.

In regard to his discussion of Jewish faculty, he could have expanded on Yale's reluctance, even with outside funding, to take more than nine refugee scholars in the 1930's (p. 124). Junior American faculty feared that the appointment at professorial rank of refugee scholars would cut off their own promotions. Yet President James Rowland Angell (1921-1937) was more welcoming than President Lowell, who rejected, in May 1933, a proposal to bring in a displaced German scholar as "an attempt at using Harvard for purposes of propaganda, to which we would not want to lend ourselves."<sup>1</sup> While Dartmouth would consider a refugee scholar, said President Ernest M. Hopkins in October 1940, "they don't want anyone who is obviously Jewish."<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, post-World War II competition from mid- and far western state universities forced Yale and other elite colleges to recruit the best faculty, whatever their religious and ethnic background.

Rather than concentrating so much on social anti-Semitism at Yale, Oren might have elaborated on the ways in which Jewish professors transformed their disciplines and earned national and international recognition. On the other hand, their hiring and social acceptance reveal much about their self-perceptions as Jews and the changing nature of Yale's "club" mentality. Medical School Dean Milton C. Winternitz evidently believed that to be successful he must become the "ex-Jew" (p. 137). He married a socially prominent gentile and was

accepted the second time around by the Graduate Club, after President Arthur Twining Hadley (1899–1921) prodded its admissions committee. As dean he maintained at the medical school a 10 percent Jewish admissions quota. In 1932, the Graduate Club blackballed Edward Sapir, Sterling Professor of Anthropology and Linguistics, because of his Jewish identity (p. 132). Not until 1946 was Yale College willing to hire as a full professor a Jew who was a social nonconformist, and from New York's Lower East Side and City College. But philosopher Paul Weiss's intellectual brilliance and inspiring teaching overcame the negative stereotypes. By 1970, Jews held about 20 percent of Yale's full professorial appointments (pp. 261–268, 326).

Oren's chapters on Jewish life at Yale describe the vicissitudes of Hillel and the problems facing religiously observant students. In "A Kosher Whiffenpoof," he shows how a minority of less than 4 percent of all Jewish students battled bureaucratic rigidity or insensitivity for alternatives when their religious calendar and observance conflicted with Yale's. Before Yale made the Kosher Kitchen part of the university dining halls in 1968, they had to either eat in an off-campus Kosher Kitchen opened in 1959 by a local synagogue or take to their residential college dining halls a kosher "TV dinner" provided for upperclassmen. But by 1969, when the Whiffenpoof singers chose Orrin Persky as a member, neither was disturbed that religious conviction prevented his traveling on the Sabbath (pp. 234–248).

The strengths of Oren's work are his painstaking archival research and his insights from 162 interviews with administrators, faculty, alumni, and others. Under Yale's twenty-year rule, presidential papers through Griswold (1950–1963) are open to research, but the full story cannot be told, Oren says, until the 1990's or later, when the papers of recent presidents and some admissions records become available (p. 146). Then perhaps he may want to assess fully the "meritocratic" admission policies of the 1960's, which caused a sharp decline in alumni children, from 24 percent in the class of 1961 to 12 percent for the classes of 1971–1976. Thereafter, faced with a deficit of millions of dollars, Yale prudently allowed the percentage of "legacies" to climb again above 20 percent (pp. 212–214). The story of Jews and Yale during the last third of the twentieth century should indeed be a subject for another essay by Dan Oren.

—Marcia G. Synnott

*Notes*

1. Located in the Papers of President James Bryant Conant, Harvard University Archives.
  2. Located in the Rockefeller Foundation files, Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, New York.
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Spilberg, Chaim, and Yaacov Zipper, Edited by. *Kanader yidisher zamlbukh—Canadian Jewish Anthology—Anthologie Juive du Canada*. Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress, National Committee on Yiddish, 1982.

The exploration of the history and social structure of a Jewish community is incomplete without examining its cultural output. Before us we have an ambitious anthology (499 pages Yiddish, 104 pages English, 68 pages French) that is an omnibus of Canadian Jewish cultural creativity. For an anthology to be a useful historical document, however, the editors must delineate their criteria for selection. In their introductory notes, Spilberg and Zipper tell us that they generally wanted to present the current state of Yiddish culture, as well as essays on Canadian Jewish communal structure.

The bulk of the volume is clearly devoted to Yiddish literature: essays, poetry, and short stories. It is not obvious why the editors also chose to include one English-language story (by Shulamis Yelin), an interview with one Anglo-Jewish writer (Irving Layton), and one play in French (by Naim Kattan). These contributions seem out of place in the organization of the volume. Although there are no English translations of the Yiddish literary contributions, the editors reprinted a few French translations of four Canadian Yiddish writers (from an anthology published in France), but regrettably these do not correspond to original Yiddish selections published in the volume. However, the summary of the contents of the Yiddish section, which appears in both English and French, is valuable for those who do not read Yiddish.

As the editors point out in their introduction, Canadian Yiddish writers always remained individually distinct, not establishing a specific Canadian group, nor adhering to any literary circle of the neighboring United States. This anthology will remain important as a presentation of the Yiddish sphere of Canadian Jewish literature. The large number of Canadian Yiddish writers of world stature include the de-

ceased Rokhl Korn, Meylekh Ravitsh, and Y. Y. Segal, as well as those creating currently, such as Yehude Elberg, Ish Yair, Mordkhe Khusid, Perets Miranski, Khave Rosenfarb, M. M. Shafir, and Sholem Shtern. Those readers and researchers interested in the specifically Canadian color of the literature will find it in the poems "In di Laurenshtns" by Simkhovitch, "Mount Royal" by Fuks, "A koymen of kanader prey-ris" by Rabinovitch, "Hoykhe hayzer" by Rogl, and "Montreal" by Shtern.

For those seeking a better understanding of the social and cultural institutions of the community, the second purpose of the volume is treated in a series of essays in Yiddish and English. For the historian of this Jewish community, some of the Yiddish essays will be indispensable, such as Shloyme Vaysman's detailed memoir of his fifty years as principal of the Montreal Jewish Folk Schools; H. Keyles's review of the Yidishe Folks-bibliotek (Jewish Public Library), a unique cultural and intellectual center founded in 1914 by Reuven Braynin and Yehude Koyfman; Yoysef Galay's portrayal of the efforts of the non-Jewish political leader Senator Telesphore Damien Bouchard to fight Canadian anti-Semitism; Artur Lermer's history of the National Committee for Yiddish of the Canadian Jewish Congress, founded in 1969; Dovid Rom's evaluation of the role in Canadian Jewish life of Y. Rabinovitch, editor of Montreal's Yiddish daily, *Keneder odler*; as well as the biographical sketches by Galay of the journalists Mordkhe Ginzburg, Yisroel Medresh, and Hershl Volofsky, and by Zipper of the journalist and historian of Canadian Jewry, Benyomin Gutl Zak.

Other essays in the anthology tend to complement recent books, articles, and conference proceedings about Canadian Jewish life. For example, Lermer reviews the history of cultural pluralism in Canada, including the monetary aid from the national government after 1971 to Jewish cultural projects, and the role which the Canadian Jewish Congress, and its former executive director Saul Hayes, played as a model for representation of other ethnic groups on a national level. In Yoysef Keydzh's treatment of Jewish immigration, in light of the subsequently published study by Abella and Troper in 1983, we only find the terse comment relating to the 1930's that "Canada was no better than many other nations," and for the war years the apologetic statement that "every opportunity that was available was exploited" (p. 450).

Among other contributions are the articles in English which analyze the Canadian Jewish Congress and multiculturalism by Saul Hayes, the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society by Joseph Kage, and a sociological profile of the Montreal Jewish Community by M. Michael Rosenberg. Throughout the volume, too much emphasis is given to Montreal, and not enough to Winnipeg, Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary, and smaller settlements. In such communities, specifically relevant to the Yiddish cultural sphere which is featured in this volume, there is a history of day schools, a daily press, radio programs, and literary creativity. Because of vital issues in recent Canadian Jewish history, this reader would also expect more discussion regarding the Quebecois and tensions and accommodations between Ashkenazic and Oriental Jews.

Finally, I would like to point out that this is not the first anthology of Canadian Yiddish writing. Back in 1934 there appeared a poetry anthology edited by Kayzerman-Vital, *Yidishe dikhter in Kanade*. More recently, in 1980, Fuks published a biographical lexicon of 420 Canadian Yiddish and Hebrew writers, *Hundert yor yidishe un hebreyshe literatur in Kanade*. In addition, in the 100-volume series *Musterverk fun der yidisher literatur*, edited by Rozhanski in Buenos Aires and completed in 1984, there is a 448-page volume, *Kanadish* (vol. 62, 1974). Since the purview of this journal is Jewish life in the Western Hemisphere, I should note that the *Musterverk* series also contains anthologies of the Yiddish literature of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, the United States, and Mexico, Uruguay, and Cuba. Someday soon, when the cultural history of communities the world over is approached by Jewish historians, the central place of Yiddish literature will be appreciated. Spilberg and Zipper's *Kanader yidisher zamlbukh* will be a fundamental sourcebook for such a history of the Canadian Jewish community.

—Rakhmiel Peltz

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Karp, Abraham J. *Haven and Home: A History of the Jews in America*. New York: Schocken Books, 1985. xiii, 401 pp.

Since World War II, the critical study of American Jewish history, like American and Jewish studies in general, has grown geometrically. Although a vast body of scholarly articles and book-length topical studies have been produced in the last thirty years, the quest for a standard one-volume history of the American Jew has proved elusive. Nearly all the general histories of the American Jewish experience written since Isaac Markens's first attempt in 1888 have failed to avoid the pitfalls of either antiquarianism or filiopietism. At present, no single-volume, general history of the American Jew is viewed as definitive or even authoritative.

Among the general surveys published since World War II, the first to win approval from specialists in the field was Henry L. Feingold's 1974 book, *Zion in America*. Writing from an "exceptionalist" viewpoint, Feingold suggested that the American Jewish experience is unique in the contexts of both American and Jewish history. A distinguishing characteristic of the American Jewish experience, the CUNY professor maintained, is Jewish "at-homeness" in America, a theme broadly represented in the literature of American Jewish history. However, he included only one short chapter on Jewish life in the United States since World War II, the period in which Jews have been most "at-home" in America during their long history in the United States. Typifying survival anxieties among American Jews in the late 1960's and early 1970's, Feingold concluded on a note of caution and suggested that the successful Americanization of Jews and Judaism may have also critically weakened the ability of American Jews to resist further assimilation and to prevent further communal disintegration.

Without question, ample time has passed since the publication of *Zion in America* for another author to step forward to revise, expand,

and improve the record and to reassess the contemporary situation of American Jewry.

The challenge to write a new scholarly synthesis of the American Jewish experience was accepted by Abraham J. Karp, a professor of history and religion at the University of Rochester and a former president of the American Jewish Historical Society. His new book, a one-volume, general survey of American Jewish history, *Haven and Home: A History of the Jews in America*, is a comprehensive, judicious, and scholarly work. Like *Zion in America*, Karp's book emphasizes the theme of Jewish "at-homeness" in America and, to a lesser extent, the uniqueness of the American Jewish experience. *Haven and Home* is animated by and concludes with a sanguine view of the Jewish future in the United States and includes three chapters on the post-war era.

Without question, Karp is the most important specialist in American Jewish history to date to publish a one-volume survey of the field. Much of *Haven and Home* is built on his own research, especially in American Jewish religious history. His major works include *A History of the United Synagogue* (1964), a five-volume reader of secondary articles on *The Jewish Experience in America* (1969), and a history of the *United Jewish Appeal* (1981), the foremost Jewish philanthropic agency in the United States today. He also cites a number of his articles and other publications. Extensive use of the history of his own community of Rochester, New York, to illustrate broad trends in Jewish communities throughout the United States adds to the vividness and vitality of *Haven and Home*.

The volume also provides evidence that American Jewish historiography is moving deeper into the mainstream of American historical scholarship. Karp, like many of his colleagues, is increasingly sensitive to the need to examine the connections between general American history and American Jewish history. For example, he suggests that antebellum Jewish life was primarily shaped by "three factors unique to America . . . freedom, frontier and immigration" (p. 59) and explains the development of the Jewish Sunday School movement in the context of the rise of the American public school (p. 74). He also quotes from Thomas Kessner's 1977 comparative study of upward mobility among Jewish and Italian immigrants in New York City (pp. 188-189). In other places, *Haven and Home* still reflects an older,

narrower approach to American Jewish history. For example, Karp leaves the impression that protests by American Jews had an impact on the course of American foreign policy during the Damascus Affair of 1840, when, in fact, the American government had already determined its position prior to the rallies organized by Isaac Leeser and others late in the summer of 1840 (pp. 41–44).

Unfortunately, *Haven and Home* is also marred by other serious shortcomings which greatly undermine the book's usefulness as a general survey. The documentation of the study is extremely narrow and will be helpful only to a handful of specialists. Moreover, neither a bibliography nor "Suggestions for Further Reading" is included in the work. Although a trend in publishing today, it is an unnecessary and easily corrected omission. The absence of illustrations, perhaps a decision based on cost, also weakens *Haven and Home*.

Karp's extensive use of original source material in the narrative of his book is problematic even though he insists that, in part, the book was intentionally designed to be "more like a slide show than a motion picture" (p. xiii). While Karp has successfully used this approach elsewhere in his scholarly writing, most recently in his essay on the Conservative rabbinate,<sup>1</sup> it is unacceptable for a general survey and should be reserved for anthologies of documents, monographs, and "Readers." Original materials allow the reader to "see" something of the past. However, they do not necessarily explain the significance of the data and values they contain. Karp's heavy use of original materials gives the book an eclectic and seemingly unintegrated character.

Compounding this problem was the author's decision to use special subchapters called "Source" and "Focus" to alert the reader to areas in the American Jewish past which the author wants to emphasize. Careful writing could have achieved the same goal with less disruption to the basic flow of the "story." Karp's use of "Source" and "Focus" subchapters is also very uneven. In Part I, he uses these devices nineteen times, while in Parts II and III together he uses a total of eight special subchapters. Particularly in the pre-1900 era, *Haven and Home* gives the impression of being long on facts and short on interpretation.

Another and still more critical problem in the book involves Karp's periodization of American Jewish history. Using the vaguely defined concept of "haven" as his sole criterion, he suggests that all American

Jewish history prior to the twentieth century constitutes one period (p. xii). Each wave of Jewish immigration began with newcomers searching for a "haven" (or adventure), *but* the Sephardim were already "at-home" in America by the time the German Jews began arriving in large numbers in the 1830's, and the German Jews were "at-home" when the East European "wave" began in 1881. With respect to their Americanization, Sephardic, Central European, and East European immigrants also had to contend with very different socioeconomic forces and with very different understandings of what it meant to be an American. Colonialism, republicanism, nationalism, and pseudo-scientific racism all demanded different responses from new immigrant groups who were seeking both to assimilate into the mainstream of society and to maintain their group's special identity.

A peculiar, if not vexing, consequence of Karp's periodization of American Jewish history is his bifurcation of the "great wave" of East European immigration. Dividing this crucial period in American Jewish history into two or more subperiods can be both practical and accurate. However, the suggestion that the first twenty years of East European immigration, beginning in 1881, were distinct and essentially unconnected to the subsequent and even more intense period of immigration at the beginning of the twentieth century is not satisfactorily demonstrated to be historically accurate by Karp.

The effort to restructure the periodization of American Jewish history is based, in part, on Karp's view that the institutional pattern for American Judaism was set by 1890, and, therefore, that prior to the arrival of the majority of East European immigrants, American Jewish denominationalism must be explained as the result of earlier developments in the nineteenth century. In fact, denominationalism and the rising tide of immigration at the end of the "Great Century" are not unconnected phenomena and should be viewed as intrinsically related developments which exemplified new and powerful socioeconomic forces in American history.

The perspective offered by urban history is particularly helpful in this regard. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, American (and other) cities began to undergo a fundamental transformation as well as massive expansion. Economic growth and the development of new industries attracted immigrants by the millions. Improvements in transportation not only affected trans-ocean passage and transconti-

mental travel but also led to new spatial formations in the emerging cityscape. New residential patterns emerged. "Uptown," "downtown," and, later, a "zone of emergence" necessitated new political alignments, and the existence of new urban problems helped to generate new religious ideologies, most notably, the Social Gospel movement.

During this period of great urban change, American Judaism also underwent great change. Without question, the history of the American Jewish community from 1881 to 1921 was as closely linked to urbanization in America as was the transformation of the post-World War II American Jewish community by suburbanization, a point Karp makes without equivocation (p. 315). Reform dominated "uptown," East European Orthodoxy established itself in "downtown ghettos," and Conservative Judaism expanded in the "zone of emergence." The need for inter-zone cooperation spawned a variety of "government" organizations and "political" alliances in the Jewish community, just as it did in the general society. The American Jewish community after 1881 evolved into a network of cities-within-cities shaped by many of the same forces which transformed American society, as well as by the ancient *Kehillah* tradition of the Jewish people. Karp's failure to explain how all these different aspects of American Jewish life, including denominationalism and immigration, fit into an organic whole, is the most important flaw in *Haven and Home*.

Because the concluding chapters of Karp's book are thematic essays and not social history like the rest of the book, they require separate analysis and comment. Toward the end of the penultimate chapter, Karp begins to develop an approach to American Jewish history which warrants greater elaboration and, perhaps, is the basis for a very different type of history of the American Jew than *Haven and Home*. "American Jews' morale for survival," Karp suggests, "is bolstered by their historic experience in America. . . . they can look back to ideologies and strategies of survival in a free and open society" (p. 359). A reappraisal of American Jewish history which concentrated on the ideological and practical efforts to balance the conflicting needs of accommodation and resistance in the struggle to maintain group survival would not only be fascinating but extremely useful to today's Jewish community in the United States.

Finally, in an intriguing variation on an old theme in Jewish history,

Karp suggests that the historical success of American Jewry can be explained in terms of a flexible "corporate posture which we may term a *dual-image identity* . . . fashioned by the folk wisdom of the people" (p. 370). Instead of viewing the ethnic and religious components in Jewish identity as antithetical poles, Karp suggests that American Jews have learned to use them as fluid, interconnected modes of self-identification which can be selectively and strategically employed to meet specific social and historical needs.

*Haven and Home* is certainly a detailed, occasionally intimate portrait of Jewish life in America from its prehistory to the present. It contains many of the elements of an outstanding general survey but is, in the last analysis, an uneven work. At its finest, it is the best-informed, most sophisticated survey of American Jewish history available today. Yet it is also seriously weakened by both conceptual and literary-organizational problems. It is a book that could have been excellent but was not fully developed and refined before it was published. Once again, the quest for a standard one-volume history of the American Jew has proved elusive.

—Lance J. Sussman

### Note

1. Abraham J. Karp, "The Conservative Rabbi: Dissatisfied But Not Unhappy," in Jacob Rader Marcus and Abraham J. Peck (eds.), *The American Rabbinate: A Century of Continuity and Change, 1883-1983* (Hoboken, N.J., 1985).

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Lance J. Sussman teaches American Jewish history at the State University of New York at Binghamton. He is completing his doctoral dissertation on the life and thought of Isaac Leeser.

Cohen, Naomi W. *Encounter with Emancipation: The German Jews in the United States 1830–1914*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1984. 407 pp.

In the writing of history, division into periods often sets a quandary, and Jewish history is no exception. A few years added or taken away at either end may alter one's vision. There was a period when Jews from Central Europe were dominant in the public affairs of American Jewry. Sometimes it is given as beginning in 1820, when conditions in Europe encouraged emigration and the end of the Napoleonic wars made it easier, and ending in 1920, when the cessation of large-scale immigration from Eastern Europe facilitated the Americanization of the much larger community of East European Jews by then settled in the country and their participation in leadership as warranted by their numbers. The years 1914–1920 take in the First World War, a catastrophic event in the history of mankind and a turning point in Jewish history. In the United States we find a clash between the older and the newer elements over the proposal for an American Jewish Congress which would speak for American Jews with one voice on the post-war settlement but also the ability of the two elements to work together in the cause of practical philanthropy under the umbrella of the Joint Distribution Committee. One cannot quarrel with Dr. Cohen for closing her study at the earlier date: we await her interpretation of the succeeding half-dozen years.

Has this group of German Jews received adequate treatment at the hands of American Jewish historians? The Sephardim bear witness to American Jewry's colonial roots and are cherished accordingly; the East Europeans were overwhelming in numbers, have the glamour of rags-to-riches achievement, contributed the spice of Yiddish culture, and benefit from the rather more developed historical consciousness of a much more sophisticated era in American life.

Nevertheless, it was the German element that set a pattern which

has endured to this day. The self-help of groups which settled in areas previously unknown to Jews; insistence on congregational and rabbinic independence; pluralism in religious and intellectual life; a strong emphasis on social welfare activity; the creation of national groups on federal lines, often cutting across but always acknowledging the independence of local organizations—these characteristics we may trace back to the German Jews. They come out most obviously in the institutions of Reform Judaism, but the pattern has been followed elsewhere.

Dr. Cohen's book and its marvelously synthesized pages bear witness to diligent research. Differences in the marking off of periods are trivial as compared with the difficulties in establishing the parameters of the subject matter of a work of this kind. What are the boundaries of *Deutschtum*, especially in a period when political boundaries have not crystallized and when transference to strange soil is involved? The absence of such clear boundaries gives scope to the author's tendency to overargue, with the result that the effect of her perceptions is sometimes blunted. Attention must also be drawn to the fact that she has apparently failed to make use of German sources, a rather perplexing oversight given the nature of her research. But as a work of synthesis, Cohen's volume stands as the outstanding interpretation of the German Jewish element within the American Jewish experience.

—Sefton D. Temkin

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Sefton D. Temkin teaches in the Judaic Studies department of the State University of New York at Albany. His biography of Isaac Mayer Wise is forthcoming.

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## Brief Notices

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Aigen, Ronald S., and Gershon D. Hundert. *Community and the Individual Jew: Essays in Honor of Lavy M. Becker*. Philadelphia: Reconstructionist Rabbinical College Press, 1986. 195 pp.

This *Festschrift* honors Montreal-born Lavy M. Becker, rabbi, Canadian and international Jewish communal leader, and the founding chairman of the Commission on Small Communities of the World Jewish Congress.

Rabbis Robert Gordis, W. Gunther Plaut, Emanuel Rackman, and Arthur Hertzberg, among others, have contributed interesting pieces to the volume. In addition there are relevant articles by Gerhart M. Riegner on "Twenty Years After *Nostra Aetate*," by Morton Weinfeld on "The Jews of Quebec: An Overview," and by Michael Brown on "The Empire's Best Known Jew and Little Known Jewry."

Altschuler, David, Edited by. *The Jews of Washington, D.C.: A Communal History Anthology*. Chappaqua, N.Y.: Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington and Rossel Books, 1985. xiii, 300 pp.

Jewish life in Washington, D.C., has always had to divide its history between those Jews who were an essential part of its everyday, every-year activities, and those luminaries who moved in and out of the nation's capital with the change of presidential administrations.

Not every Jew in Washington, from the very first who settled there in 1795, could be a Bernard M. Baruch, Julius Rosenwald, or Samuel Gompers. Most were business people and professionals, members of congregations and Jewish communal organizations.

It is on these "real" Washingtonians that the spotlight of the volume focuses. The essays are drawn from *Record*, the very fine journal published by the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington. Under the rubrics of "Synagogue Life," "Community Organizations," and "Society and Culture," these essays reflect a century and a half of Jewish life in Washington, D.C.

Now it is the turn of some enterprising young (or not so young) historian to take up the challenge from this book and to begin a full-length scholarly study of this fascinating community, located in the seat of American politics and power.

Frankel, Jonathan, Peter Y. Medding, and Ezra Mendelsohn, Edited by. *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* (Volume 2). Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986. 429 pp.

The appearance of *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, published with the cooperation of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Jerusalem, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, testifies to the steady strength and growth of interest in and support of Judaic Studies. The second volume of this annual contains an extremely important set of articles which constitute a symposium on "The Challenge of Modernity and Jewish Orthodoxy." Especially important are the essays by Jacob Katz on "Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective," and by Samuel C. Heilman and Steven M. Cohen on "Ritual Variation Among Modern Orthodox Jews in the United States." The volume also contains an interesting study by Calvin Goldscheider on "Self-Employment and Jewish Continuity," based on data derived from a 1975 Boston metropolitan area study.

Friedlander, Henry, and Sybil Milton, Edited by. *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual* (Volume 2). White Plains, N.Y.: Kraus International Publications, 1985. 240 pp.

A number of articles in this highly acclaimed Holocaust annual will fascinate those individuals interested in the American Jewish experience. Henry Friedlander and Earlean M. McCarrick discuss "Nazi Criminals in the United States: The Fedorenko Case"; Guy Stern analyzes the American reaction to the Nazi book burnings of 1933; Karen J. Greenberg discusses the "Aryanization" of German academic life and the response of the American academic community; and John Ellis Van Courtland Moon discusses the American military reaction to a proposal by Peter Bergson and the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation concerning the potential use of poison gas against Nazi Germany.

Goldscheider, Calvin. *Jewish Continuity and Change: Emerging Patterns in America*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986. xvi, 195 pp.

Calvin Goldscheider, professor of sociology and Judaic studies at Brown University, is a central figure in the important new group of younger scholars shaping the sociological study of American Jews. In this volume, Goldscheider takes on all the seers of doom and gloom who predict that the more Jews enter fully the tolerant structures of American life, the more quickly they will cease being Jews.

Based on important studies of a mid-level Jewish community, Boston, in the years 1965 and 1975, Goldscheider's conclusions offer a dramatic revision of the prevailing thesis that Jewish identity and cohesion are weakening and disappearing at an alarming rate under the relentless pressure of "modernization." He finds that Jews continue to have distinctive characteristics relative to non-Jews, and that those distinctions which make Jews different "have crystallized and widened in our time." Finally, he finds that there is every indication of an ongoing Jewish continuity in America, which, while transformed from its earlier forms, is healthy and will probably remain so in the foreseeable future.

Hyett, Barbara Helfgott. *In Evidence: Poems of the Liberation of Nazi Concentration Camps*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986. xiv, 161 pp.

In 1980, a group of volunteers from the Boston area began a project to document the testimonies of American liberators of the Nazi concentration camps. By 1984, they had interviewed thirty such liberators.

Barbara Helfgott Hyett, who was a member of the volunteer group, saw in these oral testimonies "poems trapped in the pain of the commentary." Herself a poet, Ms. Hyett arranged the testimonies to comprise a single narration—the poems of a young man who represented all the liberators, their impressions of what they experienced, saw, felt, thought.

The result is a strong statement, a moving statement by men who were simply doing their jobs, but who were witnesses to something that no men had ever seen before. One of the poems is especially haunting. "There is an artist who draws children with large eyes—I forget her name. If you take those eyes and put hell in them, those large eyes, even in the smallest face, this is what you're looking into at the camps."

Jacob, Walter, Edited by. *The Changing World of Reform Judaism: The Pittsburgh Platform in Retrospect*. Pittsburgh: Rodef Shalom Congregation Press, 1985. 123 pp.

"Rarely," writes the renowned rabbi and scholar, W. Gunther Plaut, have eighteen men, meeting together but for a few days, made such an impact on the history of our religion."

That meeting, in November of 1885, has become known in the history of American Judaism as the Pittsburgh Platform.

The Pittsburgh Platform was the first pronouncement of a set of principles hammered out from over four decades of German and American liberal Jewish struggle to shape a new direction for modern Judaism. The platform's eight principles were the foundation stones of American Reform for over five decades.

Appropriately, in 1985 at Pittsburgh's Rodef Shalom congregation, the same city and synagogue which hosted the Pittsburgh gathering a hundred years earlier, a major symposium was held to examine the platform from the vantage point of a century of Reform Jewish life in America.

The papers from that symposium have been published in this small but important volume. Among the symposium participants were Walter Jacob, W. Gunther Plaut, Phillip Sigal, Corinne Krause, Robert Ross, Samuel Karff, and Mark Staiman.

*Jewish Book Annual* (Volume 44). New York: JWB Jewish Book Council, 1986. 314 pp.

The 1986–87 edition of the *Jewish Book Annual* includes articles by B. Barry Levy on the “explosion” in Orthodox publishing, by Joseph Lowin on Herman Wouk and the liturgical novel, by Carole S. Kessner on an appreciation of Emma Lazarus on the centenary of her death, and by Brad Sabin Hill on the Hebraica and Judaica collections at the National Library of Canada. In addition, the volume includes detailed bibliographies on new books in American Jewish fiction and nonfiction.

Kugelmass, Jack. *The Miracle of Intervale Avenue: The Story of a Jewish Congregation in the South Bronx*. New York: Schocken Books, 1986. 231 pp.

Politicians and foreign dignitaries who visited New York in the 1960's and the 1970's used to request a tour of the South Bronx. At that time the South Bronx resembled a war-scarred city in England or Germany during World War II. What held such fascination for these visitors was that the South Bronx was located in the heart of the most affluent city in the most affluent country in the world.

In the midst of all this sits the Intervale Jewish Center—the last synagogue in the South Bronx. Made up of mostly elderly Jews, the congregation exists in the midst of chaos as a place of worship, as the focal point of the South Bronx's *Yiddishkeit*.

Anthropologist Jack Kugelmass was a member of the congregation for five years. This book is the result of his long period of study and observation, and tells us why the synagogue remains where it does and why its congregants choose to do the same. Kugelmass emphasizes the fact that we can learn from the lives of Intervale's members “not only about successful aging under seemingly adverse conditions, but also about the eternal human struggle to defy the limits imposed upon us by nature.”

Lesser, Allen. *Israel's Impact, 1950–51: A Personal Record*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1984. xiv, 369 pp.

Today, American Jewry enjoys a well-defined relationship with the State of Israel. Philanthropic, educational, cultural, and political relations have, for the most part, taken on a clear framework from which to operate.

But in the early years after the founding of the state, Israel's relationship to American Jews was far from clear. As Allen Lesser writes in this very important memoir, “The emergence of Israel as a nation meant [for American Jews] that new relationships had to be established,

organizational ideologies defined and traditional programs reevaluated.”

As the editor of *Cross-Section, U.S.A.*, an independent weekly newspaper that billed itself as “The Jewish Newsletter Ahead of the News,” Lesser was in a prime position to witness and analyze the bewildering changes that accompanied the developing relationship between American Jews and their Israeli counterparts at the personal and organizational levels.

This book is based upon articles written by Lesser during the two years of *Cross-Section U.S.A.*’s existence and upon letters written by Lesser to Joseph Leftwich, an English journalist and writer.

This volume is a fascinating and important source of historical information that records and analyzes the people and events central to the development of the special set of circumstances that define the relationship between Israel and the American Jewish community.