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Sephardic Jews in America: Why They Don’t Write More
*Diane Matza*

In the years between 1881 and 1924, a second, much less known, group of Jewish immigrants left the shores of Europe and Asia to come to the United States. They numbered only fifty thousand and despite numerous languages and origins have been termed Sephardim. Unlike their more numerous East European Ashkenazic Jewish cousins, their descendants have no chronicler who can recreate the world of their fathers and mothers. Neither have they written extensively about their own culture and history in America. The author analyzes the reasons for this cultural and historical paucity and finds the problem to be both an internal one and one related to the overwhelmingness of “the East European Jewish culture that came to be the basis of what most people considered to be the Jewish American experience.”

“To Love Work and Dislike Being Idle”:
The Origins and Aims of the Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum, 1868–1878
*Gary E. Polster*

The Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum (later renamed Bellefaire) was, from its founding in 1868, one of the best-known Jewish orphanages in America for over seventy years. The need to be well-known was of paramount importance to the Asylum, because, as the author concludes, it was a way of gaining the acceptance of Christian Cleveland. For, by building such an orphanage, Cleveland’s Jews “would signal the Gentiles that the immigrant German Jewish community was wealthy and responsible enough to take care of its own poor, orphaned boys and girls.” And what of those “poor orphaned boys and girls”? If they were not at the top of the Asylum’s agenda, where did their needs and expectations fit in? During the first decade of the Asylum’s existence that question was often very unclear.
Katya Hayek Arendt was both a Jew and an exile from Nazi Germany. She was the wife of Erich Arendt, a German poet who now figures prominently in the literary history of the German Democratic Republic. Indeed, Katya Arendt collaborated with her husband in numerous literary endeavors, but with no individual recognition. Yet in 1944 and 1945 she kept diaries of her exile years in Bogota, Colombia. In these diaries, according to the author, she became a “chronicler of her age, her diary a private statement of historical and literary significance.” Katya Hayek Arendt wrote as a woman, as a German exile, and as a Jew. One must read these diaries aware that, as Stephen Whitfield has written, “emigration may have mattered as much as gender in the formation of identity,” and that, indeed, Judaism or Jewish identity may have mattered equally as much.
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Sephardic Jews in America: Why They Don't Write More

Diane Matza

To record the history of their individual and collective experience; to interpret their behavior and thinking for others; to place their own culture at the center of an imaginative life, seeing in their families and rituals the material of fiction—these have been among the voluminous written contributions to American culture of Jews of East European background. Some scholars have tried to explain the motivation behind this devotion to the written word: why did and do they write has been the question. A common answer to this question has been that the Jews are a “people of the book,” that they value education, and that they possess a long tradition of scholarship. However, recent research on the goals and accomplishments of Jews and other groups in both the immigrant generation and the one following emphasizes the influence of national background rather than religion to explain choices, behavior, opportunity, and aspirations. Thus, in the case of American Jews of East European background who have contributed to the culture of their New World home, intellectual achievement in the United States is inextricably linked to the immigrant generation’s skills and occupations, to their level of education and economic status, to their exposure to political and cultural movements in Europe, and to their having left Europe in search of new identities and opportunities to develop individual talents.

There were other Jews who left Europe and Asia between 1880 and 1924, notably the nearly fifty thousand Jews from the Ottoman Empire who—despite their different languages and origins—have been termed Sephardim. Written contributions to American culture by this group and their descendants that delineate Sephardic life have not been extensive. Exploring why this has been so offers an excellent opportunity to consider how national origin shapes Jews’ cultural achievements and aspirations in the United States. My interest is in identifying those forces in the Sephardim’s experience that have encouraged and nurtured literary production and those forces that have
worked toward its neglect. To do this requires defining the nature of the Sephardic immigration, stating what the written production has been, and speculating on the reasons for the lack of a rich body of literary and analytical writings.

By no means were the Ottoman Jews who came to the United States in the early years of the twentieth century a homogeneous group. The Jews from Yemen and Syria spoke Arabic; the Jews from Yanina spoke Greek; and those from Salonica, Rhodes, Canakkale, Monastir, and other Turkish towns spoke Ladino, or Judeo-Spanish. Although they all lived under Ottoman rule, their experiences varied greatly depending on local rulers, economic conditions, European influences, and other factors. A small minority of the immigrants were urban dwellers, well-educated, cosmopolitan in outlook, and financially more secure than most immigrants. The vast majority, however, especially prior to World War I, were poor, unskilled, and ill-educated, and they had been isolated from the intellectual, political, and cultural movements that coursed through nineteenth-century Europe. After World War I, though, most Sephardic immigrant males and many females were more literate than those who had preceded them, having benefited from the proliferation of Jewish schools in the Empire in the early twentieth century.2

Among the Sephardim differences in experience, language, and synagogue customs were significant enough so that in the earliest years of their settlement in the United States these Jews from the Levant associated almost exclusively with those who came from their own small towns. By the 1920's Greek- and Spanish-speaking Jews belonged to the same associations and even intermarried. Arabic-speaking Jews in the United States have, by and large, maintained a separate and coherent community that has often eschewed relations with Jews of different backgrounds. The national backgrounds and cultural contributions in the United States of these three language groups have been similar enough, however, to consider them together in the following commentary, except on matters referring specifically to the Ladino language. For convenience, I will refer to all the immigrants from the Levant as Sephardim, although many would argue that the term “Sephardim” when used with greatest accuracy denotes only those Jews who trace their ancestry to Spain.
The main purpose of this paper is to investigate the reasons behind the small literary production of Sephardic Jews in the United States and to explore why they have tended to offer certain kinds of cultural contributions over others. First, it is important to note that literary production has certainly not been unknown among the various generations of American Sephardim. During the early days of the immigrant period there were several Ladino newspapers, and though all were plagued by severe financial difficulties, the publisher and writer Moise Gadol did manage to print his *La America* on a regular basis. In 1922 the Sephardic La Vara Publishing Company began to print a newspaper titled *La Vara*, and this remained popular for more than twenty years. In the 1930's two first-generation Sephardim from the same Seattle family wrote master's theses on Sephardic life, one on the Seattle Sephardic community and one on Sephardic folklore. Leon Sciaky, a Sephardic immigrant from Salonica, wrote his autobiography in 1946; and in 1953 Jose Mair Benardete wrote the first book on Sephardic Jews to be published in the United States, *Hispanic Culture and Character of the Sephardic Jews*. First-, second-, and third-generation Sephardim have published numerous anecdotal articles about Sephardic life in America; and two book-length works have appeared recently, Joseph Sutton's *The Magic Carpet: Aleppo in Flatbush*, a study of the Syrian community in Brooklyn; and Marc Angel's *La America*, an analysis of Moise Gadol's career and the immigrant Sephardic community in New York. Other works are forthcoming.¹

In exploring why the Sephardim have not written more than they have, we should consider the following issues: the national background of the Sephardim; their attitudes toward education; their attitudes toward language, which includes the position of Ladino in the modern world; the nature of Sephardic culture; and the availability of scholarly materials on the Sephardim.

**National Background**

First, the national background of the Sephardim shows that poverty, isolation, and a low rate of literacy in the earliest years of immigration
are certainly the most concrete and easily documented reasons for the
dearth of literary production. As most immigrants, whatever their
national and religious background, the Sephardim's primary preoccu-
pation was to earn a living for themselves and their families here and
abroad. But even those who were leaders in the immigrant communi-
ty, and may have been expected to write about their experiences, did
not. A few of these men who received high school educations in Turkey
and college educations in the United States have told me that they did
not consider themselves writers. Perhaps they didn't write for a reason
more compelling than this self-perception: the time constraint for
those immigrants who held full-time jobs and were active in Sephardic
communal life. For example, on the board of directors of the first
Central Sephardic Association, begun in 1923, were lawyers, doctors,
accountants, businessmen, and social service workers who typically
attended general weekly meetings between 9:00 and 11:30 p.m. and
spent many hours in already busy schedules participating in commit-
tee work, investigating the cost of buildings for a community center,
acting as liaisons between the central organization and smaller so-
cieties, planning fund-raising activities. Writing of any kind, then, was
a luxury even for those who had the skill.4

**Attitudes Toward Education**

In the early days, few did have the skill, and this leads to the second
point that contributes to explaining the nature of Sephardic cultural
activity: attitudes toward education. It has been a popular belief that
immigrant Sephardim did not support secular education for them-
selves or for their children. Stories abound of first- and second-genera-
tion Sephardic girls leaving school by age thirteen and boys leaving
not many years later. A Yanioti woman who emigrated at the age of
five and who eventually earned a Ph.D. told me that she and one
brother who became a doctor of medicine felt they had to "steal" their
education in the 1920's, so opposed were their parents to the frivolous
pursuit of higher education. As late as the 1950's several second-genera-
tion Sephardic men and women struggled to convince their parents
they would not "come to (their) senses" and take factory jobs but
would, instead, support themselves through bachelor's and sometimes
master's degrees.
Sephardic attitudes about education were, however, more varied than this. They depended on where the immigrants came from, on when they came, and on how well-off and how employed their parents were. Those from smaller towns where schooling was limited and where most Jews worked as laborers were likely to follow similar educational and employment patterns in the United States. Some immigrants, men and women, from larger cities such as Izmir, Salonica, and Constantinople, had attended one of the Jewish, French, German, or Scottish schools in Turkey and pursued education for themselves and encouraged it for their children in the United States. Also, by the late teens of this century the B'nai B'rith and the Alliance Israelite Universelle schools had had a significant influence in the smaller towns. Thus, immigrants who came to the United States after World War I were almost all literate, and their children attended college in America in larger numbers than had the children of the earlier immigrants.

The preferred choices of higher study among immigrant and second-generation Sephardim were law, medicine, accounting, teaching, and social work. Students who entered programs in the humanities were few, and these often studied Spanish and linguistics and became teachers and scholars in Spanish literature and folklore, a point I will return to later. For the most part, Sephardim did not become historians, philosophers, or literary, art, or music critics, as did Ashkenazim. Neither have they been writers in the imaginative sphere. Sephardim who chose the path of education chose practical occupations, ones that would provide them with a secure livelihood.

Attitudes Toward Language

The third reason for the Sephardim's not having written extensively as historians, journalists, fiction writers, and autobiographers is related to language. One aspect of language concerns audience, and in this we should find instructive the experience of Moise Gadol, the creator and publisher of *La America* and an individual whose drive to write was often messianic. One of Gadol's major complaints was that enough Sephardim did not buy his paper to keep the publishing venture solvent. Since *La America* was written in Ladino, Gadol could not reach
the Greek- and Arabic-speaking Jews, even though the paper covered issues of importance to all Jews from the Ottoman Empire. Thus, Gadol's potential audience was very small, not even the size of the entire Levantine community. In addition, since the Sephardim were poor, they frequently circulated one copy of the paper among several families. For those immigrants who might have chosen to write in their native tongue, the absence of a wide audience providing financial and emotional sustenance had to have been discouraging. And, because of the generally widespread separation in Turkey of Jewish, Christian, and Moslem communities, no Sephardic Jew would have regarded gentile Greek- or Arabic- or Spanish-speakers as a part of his/her audience.

What, then, of English? What were the Sephardim's attitudes about this new language? Where were the Sephardic immigrants who struggled for mastery of the new tongue and, attaining it, used it as a tool to explain other Sephardim and their vision of America? Again, the basic need to earn a livelihood was paramount among Sephardim. Some attended English classes established especially for them, but the English-language Jewish press and other sources on the early immigrant period (when most of the immigrants were not of public-school-age but in their late teens and twenties) contain many complaints about the infrequent attendance of the Sephardim. Most of the Sephardim chose to learn English—and occasionally Yiddish—the way they had learned Turkish before emigrating, through exposure and by necessity. For many of the Spanish-speaking Sephardim, languages other than Ladino had been necessary for business and for trading with the many national minorities in the Empire; but their national language, the language of heart and home for all but the wealthiest and most Westernized, was Ladino. What I am suggesting here is that these Sephardim would not have automatically connected attaining an accepted place in the United States with learning English quickly and well. For Ladino-speakers especially, attitude toward language did not change with emigration. They retained the attitude toward language that had predominated in Turkey: The Empire was a polyglot land where the national minorities had not been compelled to learn Turkish.

The point about language is an important one. If the Sephardim came to the United States with a strong sense of opportunity denied
them, it was opportunity denied them not so much because they were Jews or because they had their own language but because of the general financial distress and political corruption that affected Christians and Moslems, as well as Jews, throughout the Levant. Thus, most Sephardim did not consider acquisition of the adopted home’s language as more than a tool to ease their passage into the marketplace. No doubt this was true for the majority of Ashkenazim as well; but there was among the East European Jews, too, some desire for a new identity that made speaking and writing English a significant subject in the work of these immigrant memoirists and novelists. In the one autobiography by a Sephardic immigrant, Leon Sciaky’s *Farewell to Salonica*, learning English is never mentioned. As we will see later, attitudes changed by the second generation, when many Sephardic children refused to speak anything but English.

Another point about language that worked against Sephardic literary production specifically concerns the Ladino-speaking Jews. By the nineteenth century Ladino was no longer the language of extensive secular materials it once had been. Although many Jewish schools refused to renounce Ladino as the language of instruction, some reformers and institutions, such as the Alliance schools, were trying to replace Ladino with French or Turkish. To be sure, Ladino newspapers still existed; however, while the poor and working-class Sephardim clung to the old language, those who belonged to the intelligentsia most often wrote in French, and several poets wrote in Turkish. At this time there was no effort to revive Ladino or to develop it as a language for the young and the educated; and so it was unlikely that a revival would have taken place in a new land where immigrants had more pressing matters on their minds and where few people understood them.

*Cultural Factors*

This is not to say that Ladino was not the basis of a coherent culture; and it is the nature of the culture of Ladino-speaking Jews that is the fourth point to discuss in explaining Sephardic cultural activity. Ladino is the language of hundreds of ballads and romanzas preserved for centuries and brought to the United States in the early years of the twentieth century. It is important to the question of why the Sephar-
dim didn’t write that this culture of the immigrants was, essentially, an oral one. They sang, they told stories, and they added to the repertoire new tales and verses about their experience in America. These they traded amongst themselves at festivals and marriages, at the bathhouses before the Sabbath, on tenement steps and fire escapes during the summers.

It is difficult to determine the effect this cultural activity had on the second generation. Many Sephardim considered their parents’ songs and folktales to be old-fashioned and too foreign for American children to repeat or enjoy. There are countless stories of immigrant children who spoke to their parents in English rather than in the home language. Although this has been a common pattern in America among most immigrant groups, it may have been exacerbated for Ladin-speakers because the Spanish language was so closely associated with the poorer and more discriminated against immigrants from Puerto Rico. Also, when the immigrants and their children spoke Spanish or Greek or Arabic, they suffered the response of incredulity from their Ashkenazi co-religionists who believed all Jews spoke Yiddish. We may wonder whether outsiders’ responses to their language bred in the immigrant Sephardim a desire for privacy and in the second generation a desire for assimilation that worked against a strong assertion of a cultural self, which may be necessary to those who write about themselves.

Fortunately, a few among the second generation have become preservers of the culture. One second-generation Sephardic woman told me that when she attended Jose Mair Benardete’s Spanish classes at Brooklyn College and he asked her to collect romanzas from her mother, she began to appreciate fully her relatives’ storytelling abilities and the content of their tales. She went on to do her own scholarly work in Spanish. The folklorist Emma Adatto Schlesinger was fortunate in having a mother whose home was a center for storytelling sessions and who valued education; and Mrs. Schlesinger credits a Spanish professor at the University of Washington with encouraging her to study Spanish and to write her master’s thesis on Sephardic folklore.

Today, the Modern Language Association’s annual convention has a special session on Sephardic cultural studies, and a number of the
Sephardic Jews in America

scholars working in this area are of Sephardic background. Their work of criticism and interpretation is, undoubtedly, creative; but this work is, fundamentally, an act of preservation. I believe it is the fragile nature of their oral culture that accounts in part for the Sephardic stress on preservation rather than on creation of new materials in the form of autobiography, fiction, poetry, and drama. The question of audience is surely relevant here, too, for in the last several years there has been worldwide interest in sponsoring scholarship devoted to Sephardic music and folklore.

Availability of Source Materials

A fifth reason for the limited range of Sephardic literary production concerns the type of primary source materials available on Sephardim in the United States. Scholarly and analytical work on the growth and development of the Sephardic community in the United States has not fared as well as folklore studies, and there are several reasons for this as well. First, a rich source of material is the Ladino press, but though the two most regularly published immigrant newspapers, La America and La Vara, are available at the New York Public Library, few historians are able to read them.

Another problem for the historian is that other than the Ladino press, few primary sources on Sephardic life in the United States exist. The records of the Federation of Oriental Jewry, an organization begun in 1912 to aid the immigrants, were destroyed by fire. The many small burial and mutual aid societies that proliferated between 1903 and 1924 did not save written records. The records of a Harlem-based organized Sephardic community established in 1923, which were saved, have disappeared. The minutes of Shearith Israel's Sisterhood, which ran a settlement house on the Lower East Side for "Oriental" Jews, and other synagogue sources, such as the papers of David de Sola Pool, rabbi of Shearith Israel during the immigrant period, are still uncatalogued and hence unavailable to the scholar.

Nature and Size of the Sephardic Community

The last reason I want to discuss here to explain the absence of extensive and varied written production by American Sephardim is the most
powerful reason of all. It is the nature and size of this community. On the Lower East Side the Sephardic population in the early twentieth century comprised a small community within a larger and different Jewish one. Remember that compared to the fewer than fifty thousand Sephardim in America by 1924 there were two and a half million East European immigrants. This great difference in size did not result in the immigrants' immediate assimilation into the larger Ashkenazi population. Instead, the Sephardim tried to maintain the distinctiveness of their own communities. When they did move away from the sizable Lower East Side community, they settled into small communities in various parts of Brooklyn, in Harlem, and in the Bronx. Sephardic communities in other parts of the United States were already small. In all of these communities resources were too strained to support for more than a short time in any instance theater groups, newspapers, libraries, music societies, and other cultural institutions. In my view, the fragmentation of the Sephardic community, the attendant cultural inactivity that followed, and the Sephardim's existence in a world that defined Jewishness by Ashkenazi standards, combined to create in the Sephardim a sense, probably not conscious, that if they were to make their mark in America it would be because of the tangible and material gains they made, not because of who they were nor because of any cultural manifestations of their identity they might create.

Among the second generation this attitude, again not conscious, clearly persisted. Further, when the second generation chose to live in a Sephardic community and to marry Sephardim, they were, nonetheless, more distant from their cultural heritage than their parents had been. They spoke less of the home language, knew fewer songs and tales and were reluctant to sing or tell them, and they had increased professional and personal associations with the dominant Ashkenazi world. These factors necessarily worked against the Sephardim's seeing in their own culture the materials of creative expression.

Finally, it seems reasonable to suggest that the immigrant generation's experience of having felt at home in much of the Ottoman Empire meant that a need to make America theirs by having an impact on its culture was not among the immigrants' concerns and so not communicated to their children. In the second generation many Sephardim felt their own culture to be too foreign to provide the materials of a
factual or imaginative literature that would be interesting to others. They were overwhelmed by the East European Jewish culture that came to be the basis of what most people considered to be the Jewish American experience. And their increasing assimilation into the mainstream Jewish culture, which has been very common among the third generation, prevented them from discovering a voice of their own.

We may yet discover a fuller picture of Sephardic immigrant life in America if scholars turn their attention to completing oral histories with the immigrants whose memories are still vibrant. The time is probably past, however, for the autobiographies and fiction that would have spoken of Jewish households where before the High Holy Days the beds were spread with onion-skin-thin sheets of phyllo for pastries, where the wedding halls echoed with the sound of the mandolin and the oud, where the Yiddishim called the immigrants Italiyeners until the Sephardim grabbed a prayerbook and asserted their Jewishness by reading in their lyrical Hebrew.

Notes

1. For an excellent study of the opportunities open to immigrants and the matters they could control, see John Bodnar, The Transplanted (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).


4. For information on Sephardic life in the period between 1900 and 1940, I am indebted to Victory Tarry, Joseph Papo, and Albert Amateau.

5. For information on education among Sephardic immigrants and their children, I am indebted to Dr. Rachel Dalven, Joseph Elias, Isaac Ben Joya, Freddie Hazan, David Rousso, Aaron Cohen, and others.


7. Although Jews were among the groups that had dhimmi, or second-class, status in the Ottoman Empire, how restrictively this status was enforced varied widely from country to country. Most of the Sephardic Jews I’ve spoken to who are of Spanish background express a feeling of loyalty to the Empire that sheltered their ancestors who were expelled from Spain.
8. Although I am referring here to Ladino culture, these comments are probably applicable to the Arabic- and Greek-Jewish cultures, about which so much less is known.

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Set back a considerable distance from the Woodland Avenue business district and isolated from surrounding ghetto homes and immigrant shoppers by a high iron-spiked fence, the large, imposing brick building offered little hint of what life stirred within its walls. The immaculately groomed green lawn and ornately designed marble fountain out front of the stately structure impressed passers-by, and unless they were quite perceptive and noticed the iron bars on the basement windows, they could not possibly have conceived that five hundred orphans clamored about inside like so many head of cattle crowded within its pen.

Spread out over seven acres of land near 55th Street and Woodland Avenue, the Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum was, during its first fifty years (1868–1918), the home for 3,581 mostly immigrant Eastern European boys and girls. For most of this time one man overwhelmingly loomed as the dominant figure influencing every aspect of the children’s lives: Dr. Samuel Wolfenstein, the dogmatic, brilliant, charismatic, and authoritarian patriarch of the institution.

Wolfenstein began his forty-six-year association with the orphanage as a trustee from St. Louis in 1875, served as superintendent from 1878 to 1913, and then became an active honorary board member until his death in March 1921 at the age of seventy-nine. His disciple and protege, Rabbi Simon Peiser, teacher and assistant superintendent from 1901 to 1913 and superintendent from 1913 to 1919, continued most of Wolfenstein’s practices and policies during his own administration. Not until the early 1920’s did the orphan asylum change appreciably from the military-style institution it represented for four decades under the direction of these two German Jews.

In 1929 the orphanage was relocated to a thirty-acre site in University Heights, an eastern suburb of Cleveland, where it was built as a
The Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum

Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum Girls at Play
To Love Work and Dislike Being Idle

cottage-type institution and renamed Bellefaire. Bellefaire continued as an orphanage for Jewish children until 1943, when it changed its function entirely and became a residential treatment center for emotionally disturbed children. Today Bellefaire provides psychotherapy, academic training, and a therapeutic living environment for emotionally disturbed children regardless of their ethnic, religious, or racial background.

Origins and Purpose

The Jewish Orphan Asylum was initially an expression of the Cleveland German-Jewish community's desire to symbolize their rise to power, authority, and respectability. Symbols of prestige and success became important for many of the fifteen hundred German Jews living in Cleveland during the early 1860's. Proud of their rapid emergence and accomplishments in American society, they attempted to gain the acceptance of the Christian community by demonstrating to them that they indeed were Americans first and foremost.

Shedding their Orthodox, Old World heritage for a Protestantized version of the faith was one way to win approval. Patriotically fighting in the Civil War and dying for their newly adopted country was still another. A third way to gain acceptance was by building an orphanage and caring for their own needy and dependent children, much as the Protestants and Catholics had done a decade earlier. A Jewish orphan asylum would signal the Gentiles that the immigrant German Jewish community was wealthy and responsible enough to take care of its own poor, orphaned boys and girls.

The Role of B'nai B'rith

Discussions about establishing an orphanage first began at Cleveland's B'nai B'rith Solomon Lodge during the early 1860's. The International Order of B'nai B'rith, the world's oldest and largest Jewish service organization, had been organized in New York City in 1843 as a fraternal order for the fifteen thousand Jews then living in the United States. In the preamble of its constitution, the founders formulated the goals of the organization. Part of their objectives included molding
and uplifting character through the improvement of morals and values.

B’nai B’rith has taken upon itself the mission of uniting persons of the Jewish faith in the work of promoting their highest interests and those of humanity; of developing and elevating the mental and moral character . . . inculcating . . . principles of philanthropy, honor, and patriotism; . . . alleviating the wants of the poor and needy; . . . providing for, protecting, and assisting the widow and orphan . . .

B’nai B’rith consisted primarily of German Jews until the early 1900’s and remained a men’s organization until 1897, when B’nai B’rith Women came into being with the founding of a ladies’ auxiliary chapter in San Francisco. B’nai B’rith established a variety of social and benevolent programs during the nineteenth century dominated by mutual aid, social service, and philanthropy. Orphanages, homes for the aged, and hospitals were high on its list of priorities.

B’nai B’rith appeared in Cleveland in 1853 as the first private, voluntary Jewish association. It was structured along the lines of the many secret and semi-secret societies that flourished all over nineteenth-century America. Each of Cleveland’s two lodges during the 1860’s, Solomon and Montefiore, had its own round of social, cultural, and charitable activities. They both provided an alternative to the synagogue for acculturated Jews to enjoy Jewish affiliation and identification.

During the middle of the nineteenth century, the fledgling B’nai B’rith organization undertook many projects designed to work with the poor and needy. One such program, recommended by members of Solomon Lodge, led to the founding in 1868 of the Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum, the first regional Jewish charitable institution of B’nai B’rith’s western division. Its origins grew out of the annual meeting of Grand Lodge, District No. 2, which was scheduled to meet in St. Louis in July 1863.

Delegates, however, were unable to reach their destination due to fighting going on in southern Ohio and Indiana by a rebel force of cavalry under the command of Confederate General John Hunt Morgan of guerrilla war fame. Because Morgan’s troops destroyed railroad connections and burned bridges between Cincinnati and St. Louis, representatives of the twelve lodges of the district, having a
At this convention, the national president of B’nai B’rith and the representative of Solomon Lodge from Cleveland, Benjamin E Peixotto, proposed the establishment of a Jewish orphanage in the midwest to care for orphans of Jewish Civil War soldiers. Concern about the loss of lives and the impact on Jewish families had been mounting: approximately ten thousand Jews served in the Civil War, about seven thousand in the Northern armies and three thousand in those of the South; over five hundred had lost their lives. Most were recent immigrants from Germany; some served in separate units of German-born soldiers.

**Funding**

Peixotto’s plan to tax the B’nai B’rith membership a dollar a year to raise a charitable fund won hearty approval from the delegates of Grand Lodge No. 2, whose territory then comprised the fifteen states of Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, Kentucky, Illinois, Michigan, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Alabama. They unanimously resolved that “the members of the District should be taxed, in addition to the regular dues, one dollar per year, in order to create a fund, which sometime in the future, might be used for the organization of a charitable or an educational institute.”

To supplement the revenue, Peixotto encouraged women from nine cities to form societies to raise money for the fund. Among these ladies groups, the orphanage plan “met with considerable opposition,” according to Dr. Isaac M. Wise (1819–1900), organizer and early spokesman for Reform Judaism in the United States. Many probably felt that the women should devote themselves to their own local poor instead of an unrealized project in a faraway city.

Some men also voiced opposition to the use of the money for an orphanage. At the Grand Lodge meeting the following year, Ramah Lodge of Chicago introduced a resolution to divert the fund to found a Reform Jewish seminary. The Chicago delegates strongly stated that they “consider the education of orphans in private families preferable to public asylums.” The resolution was voted down.

By 1867 the fund had collected $11,994.92. At the July 1867 annual meeting in Milwaukee, it was formally resolved to use this money to
Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum Boys
establish an orphan asylum for B’nai B’rith’s District No. 2. Delegates also voted to continue paying one dollar per year into the fund “which contribution shall forever hereafter constitute a part of the regular dues of members of the subordinate lodges.” The following year this was raised to two dollars annually.13

Finding a Site

A prestigious board of trustees consisting of Abraham Aub of Cincinnati, Isidor Bush of St. Louis, William Kriegshaber of Louisville, A. E. Frankland of Memphis, and Edward Budwig of Cleveland was organized to investigate purchasing a site “at or near St. Louis, provided suitable and sufficient grounds for the purpose can be obtained.”14

Budwig, the Clevelander, was a partner in the commission business with his father-in-law, Simson Thorman, who had been one of the first Jews to settle in Cleveland. Thorman came from Unsleben, Germany, to the United States in 1835 and two years later moved to the city. By the early 1860’s they were operating a prosperous business in the Near West Side area as commission merchants and dealers in hides and furs. The 1860 census lists Thorman’s worth at $10,000 in personal estate and $10,000 in real estate. During the Pennsylvania oil boom of that decade Budwig along with several other prominent Cleveland Jews (including Peixotto) organized the Cherry Valley Oil Company with a starting capital of $500,000.15

Unable to locate suitable grounds in St. Louis, the trustees began looking at sites in Cincinnati and Cleveland as well. In February 1868 they unanimously decided to purchase the buildings and grounds in Cleveland known as the Cleveland Water Cure of Dr. T. T. Seelye for $25,000. A local committee of eminent B’nai B’rith members, comprising Abraham Wiener, Simon Newmark, Kaufman Hays, Jacob Rohrheimer, and Jacob Goldsmith, was appointed to assist with the arrangements.16

On March 3, 1868, District Grand Lodge No. 2 took possession of the grounds and large brick building located on Cleveland’s Far East Side at Woodland Avenue and Sawtell (East 51st) Street a few blocks west of Willson Avenue (East 55th Street).17 The site was located in a beautiful neighborhood immediately adjacent to an elite German
community. The large homes along Woodland Avenue, an attractive, wide, tree-lined street, east of Perry (East 22nd) Street were among the most fashionable in the city when built in the 1850's and 1860's. They housed many of Cleveland's most distinguished families.\(^{18}\)

The following month the trustees bought an adjoining lot from Dr. Seelye for $6,000. The first property purchased had a frontage of 165 feet on the south side of Woodland Avenue and a depth of 680 feet; the additional lot had a 165-foot frontage and a depth of 330 feet. The whole property covered about four and a half acres.\(^{19}\)

The local committee hired architects and workmen to repair and remodel the building so it could be ready to be formally dedicated in July. An additional $25,000 was spent furnishing and fixing the premises and preparing it for occupancy in the fall.\(^{20}\)

**Dedictory Festivities**

The impressive inauguration ceremonies took place on July 14, 1868. A parade including flags, floats, bands, and civic dignitaries, including the mayor of Cleveland, Stephen Buhrer, eighteen city council members, and B'nai B'rith officials, marched to the grounds, where they were entertained by a program largely German in flavor. It was a grand celebration of the power and respectability of the German Jewish community—a testimony to their spectacular rise in American society.

Over the entrance leading into the asylum was placed a white canvas cut in the shape of a heart bordered with and supporting festoons of leaves which proclaimed:

Seid gegrusst!
Vater und Mutter den Waisen sein,
Bringt der Liebe lehnend Streben
Selbst ein rechter Mensch zu sein
Und der Menschlichkeit zu lieben

(Greetings!
Be mother and father to the orphan
Striving to bring love
To be a just man oneself
And to love humanity).\(^{21}\)
To Love Work and Dislike Being Idle

Rabbi Jacob Mayer from the Reform Tifereth Israel congregation opened the proceedings with a prayer in German. The Germania Band provided stirring music throughout the afternoon dedication. Isidor Bush read a poem in German composed by Mina Kleeberg of Louisville, Kentucky, entitled “The Orphan Asylum at Cleveland.”

Remarks in the preface of the inauguration pamphlet hinted at the social and moral control function that would be served by the institution:

An inestimable blessing is conferred not only on the orphans themselves, but also on society, ample provisions having been made for the development of the inmates of the Asylum, physical, mental, and moral, to bring them up as useful citizens of the republic.22

Various speakers during the ceremony each reinforced the message that the asylum intended:

to provide for the orphan, not alone for his body wants, such as food and clothing but also for his spiritual wants, education, and when the orphan leaves he shall have been brought up as a good member of society, as a good citizen, capable of maintaining himself.23

The founders obviously hoped that correct moral teachings and values would help orphaned German Jewish boys and girls grow up to become “good” and “useful” Americans who would contribute stability to the rapidly changing social order and thus be a credit to their people.

The Board of Trustees

After the inauguration program was over, the doors of the orphanage were opened for inspection by the public. During the meeting of the Grand Lodge held later that afternoon, a code of general laws for the government of the new institution was adopted and six trustees were chosen to act as an executive board. They organized by electing Abraham Aub of Cincinnati as the first president of the asylum, Abraham Wiener of Cleveland as vice-president, Jacob Rohrheimer of Cleveland as treasurer, and William Kriegshaber of Louisville as secretary. The other two members of the board were Isidor Bush of St. Louis and Henry Greenbaum of Chicago.24
Wiener was one of the earliest Jews to arrive in Cleveland. He came as an infant in 1841 and later became a very successful commission merchant, operating A. Wiener and Company on River (West 11th) Street. By the late nineteenth century his company conducted a large business on the Great Lakes and in all major cities in the country. Considered a pillar of civic and Jewish life, he was vice-president of the Cleveland Board of Trade and a director of the Cleveland Board of Industry.

Wiener, the son-in-law of Abraham Aub, whom he succeeded in 1881 as president of the orphanage, played an active role in Cleveland's German cultural activities and was a prominent investor in the local German press. In 1912 his daughter, Florence, married Rabbi Louis Wolsey, spiritual leader of Congregation Anshe Chesed, one of two major German Reform temples in Cleveland.

Jacob Rohrheimer, the treasurer, another early settler in Cleveland, came to America from Lorsch in Hesse-Darmstadt, Germany, in 1847 and reached the city in 1849. Skilled in cigar-making, Rohrheimer and his brother Bernard established their own cigar manufactory in 1865 at 101 Superior Avenue and quickly prospered.

The Children Arrive

Two months after the dedication, the Jewish Orphan Asylum gathered in its wards. Kriegshaber, the secretary of the board, described the initial trip into Cleveland from Louisville:

We left Louisville, with 12 orphans adopted there. On Sunday, September 27th, previous to our departure, 5 orphans from Vicksburg, and 2 from Evansville, had arrived, who started with our party. The parting scene of their relatives and acquaintances on the mail-boat was heart-rending, yet they all soon cheered up and were all very happy on the voyage. In Cincinnati we met the orphans from that place, 12 in number. . . .

When the train arrived in Columbus, we were met by the noble ladies and gentlemen of that city, and a sumptuous lunch was given by them to the little ones. . . . At five o'clock we safely arrived in Cleveland, three omnibuses were awaiting and took our precious load to its destination, where already the children from St. Louis, Chicago, Indianapolis, Detroit, and other places had arrived. . . .

The following day . . . in the afternoon the children from Memphis arrived also. By this time there were already 65 orphans in the house. At six o'clock p.m. . . . all the children were officially received by the worthy president of the
Asylum, A. Aub, Esq., who made some very touching remarks to the little ones, who seemed all so affected, that every little child in the room was crying. . . . Mr. L. Aufrecht, the Superintendent, was introduced to the children by the president; he spoke so feelingly, and the scene was so affecting, that not a person of the sterner sex even could withhold from giving vent to his feelings—it was beyond description.29

By the end of September everything seemed in place. Mr. and Mrs. Louis Aufrecht of Cincinnati, who had been selected as superintendent and matron, had hired their staff and organized the institution and its school. At the close of 1868 the asylum already was home to forty-six boys aged three to fourteen and thirty-five girls aged five to fourteen.30

The coed congregate orphanage was not unusual in the United States at this time. In fact, another orphanage in Cleveland, the Protestant Orphanage, also had housed both boys and girls since its formation in 1852 by the ladies of the Martha Washington and Dorcas Society.31

The city's two Catholic orphanages, however, separated the children by sex. St. Mary's Female Asylum, formed in 1851 by the Ladies of the Sacred Heart religious order, cared for the increased numbers of orphaned Irish Catholic girls in Cleveland at the time. In 1853 St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum for Catholic boys was opened by the Sisters of Charity. A wide variety of dependent children, including the orphaned, half-orphaned, and abandoned, as well as those from very poor and supposedly morally unfit families, were admitted to both the Protestant and Catholic institutions. By the Civil War years of the 1860's Cleveland's orphanages simply were overwhelmed by the growing number of children needing their shelter and care.32

Louis Aufrecht as Superintendent

During its first decade, from 1868 to 1878, the Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum haplessly floundered to gain control over its own destiny. Guided by the unimpressive, inept Louis Aufrecht, a schoolteacher from Cincinnati, orphanage policy had no set purpose, philosophy, or direction. A pragmatic and punitive man, the ineffectual superintendent lacked the expertise and charisma necessary to lead the institution.
When it was convenient for him to permit a change in past procedures, he allowed it. At times the trustees needed to hold him closely in check—he frankly embarrassed them with his proposals and practices.

Under Aufrecht the JOA became a rigid, rugged, and depressing place. Described by one observer as “a schoolmaster of the old German type” who “believed in the rod as an educating medium and governed the children by fear,” Aufrecht ran the institution with regimented military discipline. Boys were whipped regularly for misbehaving. Dr. Seelye, the former owner of the asylum property, who lived behind it on Sawtell Street, explained how Aufrecht maintained such precise order:

[Aufrecht] was a clever man; he kept strict discipline among the children, especially the boys, but he did not know what they were doing behind his back. They used to break down my fence, pillage my garden and pelting [sic] the fruit trees before the pears and apples were ripe. I rarely complained to the orphan-culprits, for whom I always had a sympathizing heart.

Aufrecht, who never had children of his own, did not show any kindness, love, or affection when dealing with the boys and girls. The next superintendent once recalled in disgust how, as a trustee, he had observed Aufrecht’s heavy-handed control of the children during mealtime: “... there was perfect silence. The children were not permitted as much as to whisper. This I considered a cruelty—an unpardonable wrong.”

Maintaining Discipline

Humiliation and guilt were important disciplinary methods used by Aufrecht to control the children. His goal was to make them feel ashamed about their wrongdoings and motivate them to reform. Once when an eleven-year-old boy was caught stealing a purse containing about five dollars from one of the hired help, Aufrecht publicly reprimanded him. He called a meeting of the local trustees and all of the children to convene in the chapel where, in front of everyone, he lectured the boy in “a solemn way” about his bad conduct.

Aufrecht experimented with many different strategies designed to keep control and order over the children. He periodically drilled and
paraded them in military exercises up and down the grounds during their recreation time. He explained that these exercises were limited "to the mere rudiments of the soldier's drill, sufficient, however, to enable the children to move when necessary in large bodies from one place to another in a decent, orderly manner." The youngsters were continually forced to march together "two by two" in silence from one activity area to another. They marched to the chapel, to the classrooms, to the playrooms or playground, to the dormitories, and to the dining hall.

A staff governor and governess closely watched over the boys and girls and quickly punished acts of disobedience. Permissiveness was not allowed. The objective was to control all aspects of their lives and give them as little freedom as possible. Aufrecht and the trustees believed that a carefully regulated social system would help to rehabilitate and reform the morals and values of poor German-Jewish orphans by forcing them to conform to middle-class standards of behavior.

The superintendent felt that it was especially important to shape new children quickly so that they did not negatively influence those who had already been indoctrinated. Preventing them from talking to anyone was one effective means of social isolation. Once Aufrecht compared a group of newcomers with those who had been in the institution for some time: "The morals of the new inmates are somewhat below the general average of children of their age; but the older inmates, I am happy to state, show distinct marks of improvement."

**Separation of Boys and Girls**

Many other different methods of control were employed to produce obedient, respectful, and well-behaved children. One was to keep boys and girls separated from one another. Boys seem to have been thought of as having lower morals than girls. The orphans were segregated by sex when they ate at the long bare tables in the dining hall. They each sat on different sides of the large room silently eating under the scrutiny of their supervisors so, as Aufrecht said, they would use "good judgment" and eat all of their food.

They were separated from each other in the chapel, in the classrooms, in the play areas, and, of course, in the dormitories. Brothers
and sisters, unless they met in secret, had few opportunities to talk, let alone see one another. Even older brothers were separated from younger ones by age-segregated dormitories, dining hall tables, and marching groups.

Sometimes boys and girls did manage to get together, and this greatly disturbed Aufrecht. In the early 1870's he informed the trustees about “the impracticality of our building to keep the sexes separated” and “the need for better facilities to keep boys and girls apart.”

Another favorite tactic of social control involved keeping the children constantly busy with household chores, school studies, military drills, religious classes, and physical exercises. Making sure that they never had any free time on their hands, as Aufrecht viewed it, “greatly assists in keeping the children from mischief”—especially the older ones.

Household tasks and institutional education worked hand in hand to develop the children into a reliable, well-disciplined working class. Habits of industriousness, politeness, punctuality, diligence, and achievement were stressed, and the results must have been good. Aufrecht, sounding very pleased with the system, proudly boasted in 1875, “As a general thing our children, with a very few exceptions, are very tractable and obey all orders of their superiors, with alacrity.”

**Vocational Training of Girls**

Girls’ education emphasized domestic training. From a young age they were regularly instructed by Aufrecht’s wife, Rosa, in needlework, knitting, sewing, crocheting, braiding, embroidering, darning, and tatting. Older girls had daily tasks both before and after school for which they were responsible. They made beds, set tables, scrubbed, mopped and swept floors, washed, ironed and mended clothes, dusted, and washed dishes.

JOA’s president, Abraham Aub, in his first official report of 1869, recommended that the girls be prepared to be dressmakers, milliners, and other “occupations adapted to their capacities,” and that “those intelligent enough . . . be educated so that they could teach school.” “It is our constant aim and object,” he said, “to raise the girls in such a way so that in all the walks of life they are fitted out to provide for themselves.” Aufrecht also frequently stressed the importance of
To Love Work and Dislike Being Idle

Girls mastering skills necessary to "make themselves generally useful when they are old enough to leave the institution." 45

Those who learned their duties well were rewarded in various ways. Some were hired by the asylum as domestics after they were officially discharged at age fourteen or fifteen. Others were given prizes. In July 1874 Julia Wolf was awarded a sewing machine and Ophelia Hirshberg received forty dollars in gold. Several were usually placed in good homes as servants. 46

Many people regularly wrote the JOA requesting the polite, well-mannered girls for domestics. In 1876 William Levi from Peru, Indiana, asked for "a girl of about fifteen years old, very stout, and able to nurse five children, and do general housework." J. Solomon of Glasgow, Kentucky, also needed "an orphan girl of 14-15 years" for general domestic duties the same year. 47

Vocational Training of Boys

Boys, too, were trained to be dependable, obedient workers, although they had far fewer responsibilities than the girls: At the very beginning Aub had pointed out that the institution's education mission was to "fit them [boys] out for their future life. As we intend to bring them up as good mechanics, it would be best to train them now for such voca-

tion, hence I recommend earnestly the teaching of studies for such purposes." 48 He saw to it that the board in 1869 established a fund to assist boys who were discharged in learning a trade. 49 Aufrecht reiterated the importance of Aub's remarks when he later discussed the value of teaching the boys to have "polite manners and good conduct" as they "are raised and educated with the design of becoming mechanics." 50

Older boys were regularly charged with specific duties. Some worked in the stables, others cultivated the vegetable gardens, while still more kept the grounds clean, helped in the boiler house, or performed household chores. All of them were instructed to "love work and dislike being idle." 51

Looking ahead to the days when industrial education would become an important part of the JOA curriculum, the Industrial School Committee in 1874 recommended establishing a shoemaking and re-
pair shop and "if this department proves successful to try other branches as recommended." In 1876 the shop opened, operated by a master shoemaker paid $28 a month plus board and two thirteen-year-old boys who worked there as full-time apprentices. The next year two more apprentices were added.

All apprentices were required to work at least two years in the shoe shop. At the end of this time they either were discharged and apprenticed to a private shoe business or else continued working at the orphanage. The boys received twenty-five cents per week the first six months on the job, provided their conduct and work habits were satisfactory. Aufrecht deducted money from this amount as a penalty for misbehavior and laziness. After six months they got an additional dollar a week. At the start of the second year they received another increase of fifty cents a week, followed by a third raise to two dollars per week after another six months.

In order that they would learn habits of thrift and self-denial, Aufrecht did not allow them to keep any of their earnings except for twenty-five cents per week. All wages were "deposited monthly by the apprentices in the savings bank under their own name added to that of one of the local trustees so that the money cannot be drawn without the consent of that trustee." By the end of 1877 the shoe shop was a huge financial success. The apprentices were able to repair all of the old shoes, while the master shoemaker made new ones. Aufrecht did not want to lose his newly trained boys when they were discharged, especially since they were contributing such a nice profit to the asylum. He tried to entice them to stay by depicting life outside as hopelessly corrupt and immoral.

Continuing under the wholesome influence of their fostering home, they remain intact from the company of corrupt youth, which lurks at every corner and poisons the good morals of the unsuspecting young man who happens to be thrown in its way. Saving all their wages, and merely spending the little allowance granted them weekly as a reward for their industry and good conduct, our apprentices become inured to parsimony without falling into the extreme of sordid niggardliness.

The aim of both industrial and formal education at the JOA was to prepare the residents to become an inoffensive, well-behaved, dependable urban work force. Supervisors and teachers demanded good hab-
its and polite manners. Boys and girls learned to be orderly, industrious, punctual, law-abiding, polite, reliable, and obedient. Education emphasized good moral conduct rather than intellectual learning. Fourteen- and fifteen-year-old orphans needed to be taught how to support themselves and infused with values of patriotism and good citizenship.

The Absence of Aftercare

Once they were out of the orphanage children were often on their own. After spending on the average about five and a half years there, the youngsters usually were discharged without the asylum taking any further responsibility for them. It was then up to their surviving parents, relatives, or friends to give them protection and employment. Institution care rather than aftercare was stressed.

In 1875 the institution was involved in a minor scandal of sorts. Jerusalem Lodge No. 6 of B’nai B’rith charged that the JOA had been discharging children who were improperly clothed. Embarrassed trustees requested names of the parties involved and additional details. The following year, in July 1876, the board approved a motion recommending that a list of children soon to leave should be “published in the American Israelite [a Cincinnati Jewish newspaper] so parents, relatives, or benevolent co-religionists could provide means for their protection or employment.”

Sometimes, though infrequently, the orphanage did help support a few youngsters. In 1874 it assisted a printer’s apprentice who was making $2.50 a week while his board cost him $4 weekly. Trustees helped defray his expenses as they searched for a relative to aid him. At other times children were instructed to look up the B’nai B’rith representative from their region who might help them secure a position.

The Fifteenth Annual Report, issued in 1883, indicates that most of the 281 children, 118 girls and 163 boys, who had been discharged during this early period had, in fact, entered business-oriented jobs as clerks, bookkeepers, and stockboys instead of the trades. Only thirty-eight were listed as mechanics. Not one of the boys who had worked in the shoe shop as an apprentice continued in this line.
The annual reports provide just glimpses of orphans' later careers: Jacob Schultz went to work with his uncle in 1875 to learn watchmaking. In 1877 Louis Schwab became a machinist's apprentice, L. Meidner a printer's apprentice, and (?) Morgernstern and Louis Hirshfeldt stayed on as apprentices in the JOA shoemaking shop. Sam Adler began working with his uncle as a bookkeeper, and Sam Blitz joined Henry Greenbaum, Esq., in the banking business that same year. Some of the girls were retained by the orphanage in 1871 and hired as domestics. Eva Swaab remained in 1875, but since "she causes a lot of trouble with the other domestics," Aufrecht attempted to find a place in a private family for her.

Several promising boys who had attended high school and were recommended by Aufrecht received scholarships from the newly established Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati (the first seminary established in the United States to train rabbis) to study for the Reform rabbinate. Four went in 1875, the year of its founding, and three more in 1876—Moses Hahn, Fred Stadler, and Herman Hirshberg.

By 1877 Aufrecht had second thoughts about the advisability of raising Jewish boys to be mechanics. They simply weren't going into the trades once they left, and so he suggested something else. In his superintendent's report on October 7, 1877, he recommended that the JOA establish a model farm in the vicinity of Cleveland where boys after completing their education could be taught farming. He explained that farming would be "as profitable and perhaps surer of success than the trades." "Experience," he said, "has taught during the last ten years that a trade is nowadays not quite so sure a means for a living as farming is." The board, however, disagreed and turned down his proposal. For the time being at least, the trustees appeared reluctant to turn Jewish city boys into farmers. Forty years later they would change their minds.

**Formal Education**

The schoolroom was another place where a youngster's values and morals could be reformed. In his first years as superintendent Aufrecht spent much of his time and energy organizing and teaching in the school he established at the JOA. Most of the children had little or no previous formal education.
Boys and girls thirteen years old could barely understand McGuffey's second reader. In 1870 only five (all boys) of the 138 children between the ages of four and fifteen attended the city grammar or high school. The remainder over six years old were all placed in grades one through five at the asylum school.

The four- and five-year-old children presented Aufrecht with a difficult problem. He would not put them into first grade and was against running a nursery school. There were less than twelve kindergartens in the entire United States in 1870, and none appeared in the Cleveland public school system until 1896. What should he do with them?

In January 1876 Aufrecht recommended to the board that "children not be admitted until six years of age so they can go right into the schoolroom." That way they could be closely supervised along with the rest. But once again the trustees denied him his request. Aufrecht could not convince them to see his point of view. He grew increasingly frustrated and impatient over his inability to implement ideas.

The school curriculum at the JOA in the early 1870's stressed the basic skills of reading, spelling, writing, and arithmetic as well as German, Hebrew, geography, and Bible studies. Each subject was taught in a class period of one and a quarter hours. Teachers conducted strict courses usually typified by repetitive, monotonous drills such as first counting up to one hundred and back, next doing it by odd numbers and then again by even ones. Slate exercises consisting of copying straight lines, printed lower case and capital letters, and numbers were routinely done. Beginning in third grade students received three classes a week in German. This emphasis on German continued for over fifty years until 1919 when, in accord with the practice adopted by the public schools, it was dropped from the curriculum as a reaction to World War I.

In 1875 Rabbi B. Felsenthal, a trustee, attempted to make German an equal language with English in the schoolroom and chapel. His motion maintained that since "most if not all the children were of German parentage," a great need existed to emphasize more German literature and language studies. He resolved:

that the German and the English be considered as coordinate languages in the Asylum, and that they shall have equal claims and rights in the plan of instruction and for this reason, German shall be used as the linguistic medium in some
branches of learning; and shall alternately with the English, be the language of the exhortations, sermons, and lectures, given in sabbaths and festivals, to the inmates of the Asylum.

The motion was defeated for the given reason that both school and religious instruction “would lose their value when delivered to the inmates in a tongue which they but very imperfectly understand.” English had already become the boys’ and girls’ primary language.72

Americanization and Moral Education

The Americanization of poor immigrant German-Jewish children and their assimilation into middle-class Anglo-Saxon culture became an important goal of the prominent Jewish trustees directing the institution. While on one hand they were extremely proud of their German heritage and constantly promoted its history and values, on the other they realized that an urgent need existed to transform these orphans of the streets into a morally conforming cohesive group. “The education of our orphans,” Aufrecht continually reminded the community, “which I indeed consider the most essential object of our Institution, is American and Jewish at the same time.”73 After all, the Protestants and Catholics had established orphanages in Cleveland to rescue their own children from lives of delinquency and poverty. Jews could do the same.

Books helped teach the right morals and values. In 1871 Cleveland’s B’nai B’rith Montefiore Lodge and the Literary Society donated seventy-five volumes of English classical works and historical juvenile books to establish a library at the JOA.74 By the following year the library already contained 450 volumes. One of the fourteen-year-olds acted as the librarian. During their recreation time older boys and girls were allowed “the privilege” of reading library books, though not for too long, “so that bodily exercises, so much needed in the development of youth may not be set aside.”75

When the city in 1874 built Outwaite Grammar School within five minutes walking distance from the Asylum, Aufrecht, being the pragmatist that he was, welcomed the chance to send more youngsters to the public school and thereby relieve his overcrowded facilities. Praising the city schools in October 1875 he said, “The advantages which
our children derive from attending the public schools are marked, as
the public school system of Cleveland is excellent, and the competency
of her superintendents of education and her teachers are widely
known."76

Thirty-five boys and girls went to Outwaite and five to Central
High School in 1874, while 147 stayed at the JOA primary school.77
Three years later twenty-seven were at Outwaite, five at Central, and
181 in the institution school.78

Teachers at Central frequently praised the orphans’ "good deport-
ment and steady application to their studies."79 If they misbehaved,
students in the city schools, just like at the JOA, could expect to receive
a good thrashing with a rod or whip.80

Overcrowding

By the end of 1875 a major yellow fever epidemic in the South had
resulted in a sudden increase of residents to 210 (111 boys and 99
girls) and the orphanage was bursting at its seams. Children came to
the JOA from all over B'nai B'rith's western district, although the
largest number were from Ohio (45). They arrived from Michigan
(13), Indiana (14), Illinois (17), Wisconsin (6), Minnesota (2), Iowa
(2), Kansas (3), Missouri (35), Arkansas (2), Mississippi (11), Ala-
abama (1), Tennessee (29), Kentucky (17), and Louisiana (3).81

Aufrecht was unhappy. The institution was not meant to accommo-
date so many youngsters. Things weren't working out the way he had
hoped they would. The board didn't seem to respect his ideas. He
began to think of resigning.

The great number of inmates taxing the full capacity of the Asylum, the insuffi-
ciency in our assistants to take proper care of such vast numbers; an unusually
long, and in severity, an almost arctic winter, and without the proper means to
procure adequate heat to check the cold; sickness among the inmates, besides
frequent prostrations of my wife, our matron; all these circumstances com-
bined to tax my patience and energies to the utmost.82

Discipline seemed to be breaking down at times. With his wife ill much
of the year and the governess quitting on him, Aufrecht was frustrated
at not being able to provide proper supervision for the girls. On many
occasions when there were no adults to watch over them, they were completely on their own.83

Epidemics, ravaging the city, also affected the orphanage. Four children had died during the past four years, two from scarlet fever in 1871. Illnesses such as chicken pox, scarlatina, consumption, erysipelas, dropsy, diphtheria, malaria, anemia, pneumonia, tuberculosis, rheumatism, and tonsilitis periodically hit the institution.84 Medical facilities were cramped and inadequate.

The resources of the asylum were being strained. The great depression of 1876–1877 only compounded the problem. Larger numbers of children needed to be managed and controlled on fewer and fewer dollars. Yearly expenses rose from $22,000 in 1869 to $30,065 in 1876, while the annual amount spent to care for one child decreased from $186.44 in 1869 to $143.85 in 1876.85

The Daily Routine

As the number of residents increased from 118 in 1869 to 217 in 1877 Aufrecht struggled to implement a number of changes designed to improve order, precision, and control. He feared that large numbers of children would get into trouble if they were not kept constantly occupied and supervised. A rigorous and well-ordered schedule, hopefully, could help to prevent misbehavior.

The rigid daily routine he set up was followed throughout most of the year except on Saturdays, Sundays, certain holidays, and during the one and a half month summer vacation in July and August. The object was to bring the children under as absolute control as possible by following a fifteen-hour schedule in which segments of time were precisely divided.

Boys and girls were awakened in their large, neatly spaced barracks-like dormitories at 6:00 a.m. in the winter and 5:45 a.m. in the summer. They were allowed forty minutes to wash, dress, and be inspected for neatness and cleanliness and then spent fifteen minutes in morning praer. They next marched to the dining hall, where they silently ate their breakfast of bread, butter, coffee, and oatmeal mush from 7:00 to 7:30.

After eating, the younger children filed out to their playrooms or playground areas for seventy-five minutes of recreation, and the older
boys and girls went to work at their assigned household duties. At 8:45 they all went to school for two morning sessions that were divided by a twenty-minute recess. Aufrecht, three unmarried women, and one other man taught approximately 180 students in the mid-1870's.

At 11:45 they marched back to the dining hall for their main meal of the day, which was referred to as dinner. It usually included soup, meat, potatoes, and other vegetables and fruits in their season. After they had finished eating they were taken back to the play areas for recreation, exercises, or drills until 1:45 p.m. when they returned to their classrooms.

There were two afternoon school sessions between 1:45 and 4:45 with an intermission of thirty minutes at 3:00 during which time they were served a light snack called lunch. Generally this included a piece of bread with molasses syrup on it or, more rarely, some fruit. Between 4:45 and 6:00 younger children played while older ones worked again at their chores until supper was served. After supper, a very skimpy meal consisting of tea, bread and butter, and rice or potatoes, the still-hungry youngsters marched back again to their schoolrooms to prepare, under the supervision of their teachers, the next day's lessons. They were dismissed from their studies to the dormitories, class by class, after roll-call and evening prayers. The youngest went to bed first at 7:30, and by 9:00 all children were under the covers with the lights out.

On Friday nights, instead of homework study sessions, the residents attended thirty minutes of Sabbath worship in the chapel. Religious services were also conducted on Saturday mornings between 10:00 and 11:00. Aufrecht, who presented his weekly sermon, conducted the ritual and was assisted by a few of the bigger boys. Older children also attended Saturday morning classes in Bible studies, Hebrew, and catechism, and along with the rest of the boys and girls received one hour of instruction in the afternoon in Jewish history taught by Aufrecht and an assistant. Classes were also conducted on Sunday. Girls studied needlework under the supervision of Mrs. Aufrecht, and some of the children had sessions in drawing, singing, gymnastics, and religion.

Aufrecht became so desperate to keep the inmates quiet, obedient, and busy that he even resorted to organizing a "vacation school" dur-
ing July and August. Children spent five days a week in two one and a half hour morning and afternoon classes where they reviewed the lessons learned during the previous academic year. In the absence of their teachers, fourteen- and fifteen-year-old boys and girls served as monitors to maintain order. In addition to their summer studies, those in the higher grades were given library books and were told to spend two hours every day reading the "instructive and amusing literature." In 1877 Aufrecht, with great relief, said that the vacation school "greatly assists in keeping the children from mischief." \(^{87}\)

**Rebellious "Inmates"**

While most boys and girls probably adapted to the rules, regulations, and harsh regimentation of institutionalized life, there were certainly those who did not. Wolf Moses, a new boy from Chicago in 1877, was one such rebel.

Being used to the open, carefree life of the streets did not predispose Wolf to the strict JOA discipline. Life on the outside was too tempting for him to stay cooped up in the asylum. So on many occasions Wolf, when he felt like it, quietly sneaked out. Sometimes he returned on his own and other times he was escorted back by the police. One can only imagine the number of whippings he received from Aufrecht. By the end of 1877 the superintendent smugly reported that Wolf was "getting used to the Orphanage and its discipline." \(^{88}\)

Boys and girls like Wolf needed to be reclaimed by society and converted to right thinking and proper conduct. This was the primary mission of the JOA. It was no secret. The German Jewish press continually emphasized the importance of rescuing homeless Jewish children and reforming them. A newspaper article about this in May 1876 commented:

... orphanages founded for poor Jewish orphans not only to supply their physical wants, but [sic] mainly for the purpose of giving them a sound education and to bring them up in the fear of God; in fact to reclaim to society so many good and useful men and women who otherwise, from circumstances for which they could not be held responsible, would grow up as outcasts of society. \(^{89}\)

Those who were too troublesome were dealt with in special ways. The
Religious Education

Religious education at the JOA helped to instill the fear of God into small, impressionable youngsters. Besides regular school classes in Hebrew, Bible studies, and catechism and weekend sessions in Jewish history, Aufrecht’s sermons from the pulpit every Sabbath, along with morning, evening, and mealtime prayers, stressed correct behavior, “what is worthy of imitation and what is to be shunned.” Children were instructed to love their schoolwork, act politely, dislike idleness, have good conduct, and learn about Judaism. The best students in religious classes were awarded prizes of money. The few children attending public schools received special instruction in Hebrew, German, Bible studies, singing, and drawing at the orphanage on the weekends and evenings. Aufrecht’s net caught them all.

In 1877 ten boys and ten girls were confirmed from Tifereth Israel by Rabbi Aaron Hahn. They had studied under him for this important Reform ritual throughout the year. There were no Bar Mitzvahs at the orphanage during the first decade.

Clubs also helped to promote appropriate morals and values. In 1874 two Literary Societies formed, one for boys and one for girls, with the specific function of transmitting moral and intellectual culture and watching over the morals of fellow-members. They elected officers, wrote bylaws, and held regular meetings for the purpose of discussing essays, reading poems, and holding debates, all of which were closely monitored by one of the teachers.

Adoptions

Policies controlling the number of inmates permitted at the orphanage also helped to ensure tighter control with a limited budget. Children older than eleven years usually were not admitted. Neither were youngsters whose parents were divorced, separated, or seriously ill. Boys and girls were immediately dismissed whenever trustees learned that either surviving parent had remarried. Other children were given
in adoption to families recommended by B'nai B'rith representatives. Eight were placed with families who adopted them during 1870.96

In the summer of 1876 Mr. and Mrs. Polk from Quincy, Illinois, applied to the JOA to adopt a seven- or eight-year-old girl. Aufrecht wrote the relatives of two girls to obtain their permission for adoption. He received consent from one girl's relatives but did not get an answer from the other. The board decided that the Polks could adopt either one of the girls.97

In making this decision the trustees followed the adoption policy they had established the preceding year:

Resolved that whenever hereafter application is made for the adoption of an orphan child from the asylum, the Board shall consult the former guardian before such application is finally granted, and the child surrendered; and it shall not be granted if valid objections be raised by said former guardian within thirty days from notification by the Secretary.98

As guardians of the inmates, orphanage trustees had the power to give them out in adoption. Ten were so placed during the first decade.99

Aufrecht Resigns

By the end of 1877 Aufrecht had had enough. Both he and his wife were ailing, and he wanted to leave his very strenuous and frustrating job for a more rewarding position in education. On January 6, 1878, he submitted his resignation to take effect on July 1.100

He returned to Cincinnati, where he was named Professor of Hebrew at the Hebrew Union College. He died four years later, on July 26, 1882, from kidney disease. The first decade of the Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum was over.

The years between 1868 and 1878 were formative ones for the young orphanage. Aufrecht and the German Jewish merchants sitting on the board of trustees wrestled with ways to effectively socialize, educate, and control the growing number of German orphans in the asylum. Aufrecht, the pragmatic though hapless drillmaster, never quite succeeded in implementing any of the expensive plans he devised. Constantly frustrated by the trustees, overcrowded facilities, inadequate finances, children's epidemics, poor discipline, and his
wife's and his own failing health, he resorted ultimately to harsh military order to maintain control. In the end the task proved to be too much for him. Having run out of devices and expedients, he finally and somewhat shamefully quit. In their next superintendent, the Cleveland trustees would get more than mere respectability. The stage was set for the entrance of Dr. Samuel Wolfenstein, the charismatic, forceful, and brilliant personality who would dominate the JOA for the next thirty-five years.

Notes

3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Allan Peskin, This Tempting Freedom (Cleveland: Fairmount Temple, 1973), pp. 16-17.
7. Fiftieth Anniversary Commemorative Pamphlet, 14 July 1918 (Bellefaire Jewish Children's Home Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio), pp. 9-10.
8. Jewish Orphan Home Alumni Association Bulletin (Cleveland: Jewish Orphan Home Alumni Association, July 1968). Three Jewish orphanages already existed in the United States. The first one was started in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1801, the second in Philadelphia in 1855, and the third in New York City in 1859. Arthur Goren, "Jews," in Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups, ed. Stephan Thernstrom (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 578. Peixotto (1834-1890) was a native American Jew of Sephardic (Spanish ancestry) parents who first came to Cleveland in 1836 with his father, Daniel L. M. Peixotto, M.D., a professor at the newly founded Willoughby University Medical School (which later merged into Western Reserve University Medical School). Benjamin Peixotto became a prominent businessman and investor in western Pennsylvania oil. He served in Cleveland as the first president of the Young Men's Hebrew Literary Society and was a leading member of B'nai B'rith's Solomon Lodge. In 1864 he completed his term as national head of B'nai B'rith. Peixotto helped organize the Hebrew Benevolent Society in Cleveland in 1855, a society for local charitable purposes and a Hebrew Sunday School at Tifereth Israel Congregation. In 1856 he became the associate editor of the Cleveland Plain Dealer. Gartner, pp. 5, 21, 23, 24, 26, 40, 57.
9. Encyclopaedia Judaica, s.v. "United States." Fifty-two of the 1,134 Ohio Jews who fought in the Union Army were killed in action. Gartner, p. 27.
10. Fiftieth Anniversary Commemorative Pamphlet, pp. 9-10; Gartner, p. 58.
12. Report of Exercises in Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the Jewish Orphan Asylum, July 1918 (Bellefaire Jewish Children's Home Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio), p. 6. One of those opposed to the resolution was Isaac Wise, the subsequent founder of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.
13. Ibid., p. 5.
14. Ibid.


17. Ibid.


20. Ibid., p. 32.

21. *Jewish Orphan Asylum Inauguration Pamphlet*, 14 July 1868 (Bellefaire Jewish Children’s Home Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio).

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.


26. Ibid., p. 86.

27. Ibid., p. 11.


29. Gartner, pp. 59–60; *Cincinnati American Israelite*, 8 October 1868.


32. Ibid.


34. Wolfenstein, p. 13.

35. Ibid. p. 12.

36. Minutes of the Board of Trustees, 23 January 1876 (Bellefaire Jewish Children’s Home Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio).

37. Ninth Annual Report, October 1877 (Bellefaire Jewish Children’s Home Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio).

38. Ibid.


40. Fourth Annual Report, October 1872.

41. Ninth Annual Report, October 1877.

42. Seventh Annual Report, October 1875.

43. Ninth Annual Report, October 1877.

44. First Annual Report, October 1869.

45. Seventh Annual Report, October 1875.

46. Sixth Annual Report, October 1874.

47. Eighth Annual Report October 1876.


49. *Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Jewish Orphan Asylum*, July 1893 (Bellefaire Jewish Children’s Home Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio).
Some of the trades that the boys had entered were plumbing, photography, watchmaking, carriage-making, tinning, and printing.

The rapidly growing American economy during the late 1800's offered attractive opportunities for young men to become entrepreneurs. The role model of successful German-Jewish businessmen reinforced the idea that Jews could achieve prominence through hard work and good salesmanship.

The governess probably was overburdened by the extra work resulting from Rosa Aufrecht's relinquishment of her duties as matron.

Per capita contributions and donations to the orphanage were down during the depression year of 1876. The institution received its operating income from B'nai B'rith lodge dues, benefits and sales conducted by ladies' auxiliary societies, interest on investments, legacies, donations, and yearly subscriptions to orphanage literature.

Trustees and staff routinely referred to the children as "inmates."

To Love Work and Dislike Being Idle
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In Exile: The Latin American Diaries of Katja Hayek Arendt

Suzanne Shipley Toliver

In the darkest and heaviest days of history, because it is an unbearable moment in human history, I seek some world removed from pain and horror, not to be swept away into madness and war, to hold on to an island of humanity no matter how small. The worse the state of the world grows, the more intensely I seek to create an inner and intimate world in which certain qualities may be preserved.

—Anais Nin.

Politically powerless to alter events affecting their lives, women have traditionally turned to the diary form to express private opinions about their public selves. Some diaries reveal the musings of a famous person, one whose accomplishment has drawn public acclaim, while other diaries possess such intrinsic appeal, due to the conditions under which they were written, that the fame or anonymity of the author is irrelevant. The Colombian diaries of Katja Hayek Arendt in a sense meet both criteria. As the wife of Erich Arendt, a German poet who now figures prominently in East German literature, she collaborated in numerous literary endeavors, but without individual recognition. In the diaries of her exile years, however, written in Colombia in 1944 and 1945, she describes the events of a life in a remarkable way exemplary, recording impressions that, no matter how unique they may at first appear, characterize an epoch. A Jew by birth, and an exile from Hitler's Germany between 1933 and 1945, Katja becomes a chronicler of her age, her diary a private statement of historical and literary significance.

European Experiences Before Exile

Katja Hayek was born in Germany on July 11, 1900. Although little has been recorded concerning Katja's early life, we learn from her diaries that her father, Simon Hayek, was a prosperous businessman in Mannheim, and that she had several siblings—two brothers, Edgar
Katja Hayek Arendt in Colombia (1944-1945)

(Source: Erich Arendt, *Tropenland Kolumbien* (Leipzig, 1954))
and Wilhelm, and three sisters, Rose, Ilse, and Gretel. Her mother raised the children with little religious instruction, although they celebrated Jewish holidays. She describes her upbringing as liberal. Katja studied Romance languages at the University of Heidelberg, where she received her degree before moving to Berlin in the twenties. There she met and married the expressionist poet Erich Arendt, a member of Herwarth Walden’s *Sturm* circle. She was twenty-nine when they married on August 4, 1929; he was twenty-six. Their Berlin beginnings were marked by the creative and intellectual energies epitomizing the end of the Weimar era, an expressionist fervor which would be reduced to deadly silence only three years later.

Erich Arendt left Germany on the day of the parliamentary elections in March of 1933, a few days before the burning of the *Reichstag*. His decision to emigrate came after months of harassment by Hitler’s *Braunhemden* (Brown Shirts), who had kept the poet under surveillance, even searching his apartment. Katja followed Erich in June, joining him in Switzerland, where they lived with friends until Katja found employment in the home of a couple in France. While she educated their children, Erich found a new home for them in January of 1934, on the Spanish island of Majorca. From this vantage point they witnessed the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936. Their sympathy for the Republican cause was reinforced when local allies of Franco took over the island’s government and began a reign of terror that inflicted great suffering on many of their farmer friends. Their quiet rural life was further disrupted by the arrival of Franco’s troops on the island in September, which forced them to flee the country. They were, however, determined to do their part in the wave of support for the Republicans that was developing across Europe, and as soon as they reached a safe haven in Italy, they purchased tickets for the return trip to Spain, arriving two months later. Katja stayed in Barcelona during the Civil War years, serving as a secretary and nurse for the International Brigades; Erich joined a Catalanian division, where he acted as a reporter from the front, publishing articles in German, Spanish, and Catalanian newspapers. Until 1939 the couple fought fascism on their first foreign front, an activity in which they would engage for yet another decade.

The year 1939 marks the most thrilling era of exile for both Katja
and Erich: forced to flee Spain due to the Republican defeat, they escaped over the Pyrenees to join friends in France. They found a small mansard apartment in Paris, and Katja records their evenings there with friends and fellow exiles as some of the most rewarding of their exile years. It was a time of exhilarating exchange, a period of unmatched intimacy in their marriage, an epoch of insecurity and aliveness. Erich describes the time as unequalled; “One lived from one moment to the next, without plans or concrete goals, naturally with neither housing nor possessions: an independent, almost idyllic life that had nothing in common with the visions of it formed from a later perspective.”

With the outbreak of World War II, the situation deteriorated. The German defeat of France in 1940 meant that Paris could not continue to offer them refuge. When the roundup of foreign nationals began, Erich was arrested and imprisoned in the former Olympic stadium, Colombes. Katja at first remained in Paris to keep account of his location. But as Erich was transferred from camp to camp, first working on the docks in Bordeaux, later in Toulouse, Katja decided to move from Paris to Marseilles, where she could apply for transit papers and hopefully obtain passage for them on a ship leaving the harbor to cross the Atlantic.

Arendt obtained forged release documents from his camp physician and began his search for his wife; through friends they were reunited in Marseilles. By the time the couple received permission to leave the continent, however, the harbor was closed to transatlantic traffic. They were forced to reenter Spain illegally (as freedom fighters in the Spanish Civil War, they were denied entry into Franco’s Spain, but they were also afforded privileges later in exile, such as a Mexican passport). In October of 1941, the Arendts reached Cadiz, the southernmost port of Spain, and they boarded the ship Capo de Hornes for their destination of Colombia. No task to be accomplished effortlessly in times so politically troubled, the Arendts’ voyage to Colombia was not without difficulties. Before they could reach their destination, the couple was taken from the ship by British soldiers, who suspected Erich Arendt (one of the few “Aryans” on board) of being a Nazi sympathizer. The couple was held in a camp on the island of Trinidad, but, once they were cleared of suspicion, they were flown by the same British troops who had removed them from the ship to their Colombian refuge.
Colombia as a destination of exile was a fortunate choice for the Arendts: they entered various support groups—some, like the HICEM, due to Katja’s Jewish affiliation, others exclusively political in nature. The HICEM provided the Arendts with their first lodging in Bogota, in the Hotel Corn. They next moved to a small apartment in the Avenida de Caracas, which they would occupy for the next nine years. The HICEM continued to supply them with a monthly allowance of ninety pesos, a modest amount, but enough to prevent total insolvency in the beginning. Katja addressed envelopes to earn money in the first years; Erich taught German and Spanish. Finally, after a winter of making papier-mache dolls, Katja found their future source of income. At a cocktail party given by their neighbor Anna Kipper, Katja served some of her homemade candies, and a lucrative offer was made to contract the delectables. A number of emigrants were present and added their orders to the list, and, within a few days, the Arendts had begun buying the equipment necessary to outfit their small kitchen for chocolate production.

The World of Work

The diary begins here, with the opening days of Katja’s business, “Chocolates Catherine.” Written between January 1944 and November 1945, Katja Arendt’s diaries are like her exile existence—interrupted, sometimes formless, confused about facts and self, the private conflicts of a person living a publicly heroic life. The topic most often mentioned in the first months is that of her new occupation. Katja writes of her pride in newfound craftsmanship, of the challenge of accomplishment for herself and for Erich, who met much of Bogota’s exile community while marketing his wife’s chocolates. At first Katja concentrates on the external worries, such as finding enough almonds and chocolate to supply the orders, securing the room and equipment needed to begin.

January 12: For a fee of three pesos, Erich has officially registered our chocolate business with the local authorities.

February 22: Frau Moll has loaned us her scale. What a relief—we’ve been using Erich’s handmade one until now. He built it from scraps of wood he had sawed with a hedge-trimmer and worked, then added a counterweight of half a
pound of sugar. That's why we haven't been able to produce larger quantities
until now!

May 25: I am exhausted by this wind, by the unbelievably high temperatures
and the elevation over two thousand meters above sea level. With Erich run-
ing around madly trying to beat his own best records, the Americans have
begun to call him "the candyman." That's cute. Anna brings the news of our
chocolate maker's arrival. EUREKA! I rush to find Erich in the frenzy of the
Septima and we scurry off to buy him a hat in celebration. Just to think, his last
one is from Marseilles! How wonderful that we can begin to think big—up until
now our "factory" has survived on: 1 small and 1 large aluminum pot, 1 milk
container, 1 water pitcher, 2 silver spoons (one of which was stolen from the
Hotel Continental in Barcelona by a Russian anarchist and given to us in com-
memoration of the Spanish Civil War!), 3 wooden cooking spoons, 1 large and
1 small almond grinder, 4 clay bowls, some cardboard covers we use as drying
trays for the chocolates, and one handmade wooden scale. To think that with
these limited materials we have managed to produce some forty pounds of
chocolates daily for weeks! By hand! Now all of that can change. Heider
comes by to watch us work, and after he leaves at midnight, we keep at it until
3:00 a.m. Soon all of this will be over.

Earning a living demanded much of Katja's energy, and yet she
could pass an occasional afternoon shopping for something other than
almonds, or in going to the ballet or to a concert. Some mornings she
would linger in bed to read or knit, since the weather could be unfa-
vorable for candy production. She made regular entries in her diary,
by springtime her thoughts beginning to turn from the rewards of her
work to its demands. In May she takes one of her first days to relax,
remarking,

I've ordered some handwoven material for a winter coat and I even tried on a
dress. It was gray and so beautiful. After treating myself to apple cake and
whipped cream, I decided to order the gray suede shoes I liked, and so I spent
this day like a regular woman of the world, without a care, concerned only with
the ladylike art of passing the time. For once, amid this hectic pace of my new
work, it is soothing to the soul.

Katja and Erich could have worked even harder, but decided that
their daily lives demanded precedence over income. As Katja com-
ments to Carlos Gruell, a German emigrant who established his own
musical academy in Bogota, "We could easily earn over a thousand
pesos per month, but we also want to live!" She refused to concentrate
on the accumulation of wealth, a character trait she associates with Bogota's "bourgeoisie" in her diary entries.

August 20, 1944: What good is the breadth of South American landscape when life is so narrow here? The human aspects so limited, especially in regard to women. Uneducated people are so easy to please! Lewy\textsuperscript{11} claims he can be happy here with just three good friends—but what does he expect from life, anyway? All he does is earn money, play cards.

November 3, 1944: Today I'm a real lady—secretly I order Mozart's Ave Verum to sing, order a leather belt of crocodile, and am finally as content and relaxed as ever—I realize again that one cannot live on work, sleep, and food.

Katja especially enjoyed learning about Bogota life from her work. On September 13, 1944, she writes,

I delivered the pompous 2-pound order of chocolates to the governmental palace for Cecilia Caballero Lopez.\textsuperscript{12} Such a sharp contrast the stinking public market provides, where I then went shopping. Then I went to Frau Zelwer for tea, her guest a Silesian Jew of exceptional beauty—she is unbelievably dumb, has a lump of a husband, who can cook surprisingly well (he manages the famous restaurant Temel). In this profession, one meets such a variety of people from all social levels. Everyone, small or large (coin purse included!) eats chocolate.

\textit{A View of the Indio}

The working world brought Katja into contact with the native population of Colombia, and especially the Latin American Indian, the Indio. In the market, on the bus, during excursions into the steppe regions, Katja could observe Colombians in their daily environment, a setting that many exiles avoided. Numerous accounts in her diary reveal her constant curiosity about native life. In the city, she comments on such social issues as the exploitation of the Indio for inexpensive labor, especially noting the poverty and drunkenness common to those social classes lacking the educational resources to improve the debilitating economic factors controlling their position in Colombian society.

Katja's remarks concerning contacts with the native population do not elevate life in the tropics to the fulfillment of a romantic longing for primitive simplicity,\textsuperscript{13} but rather illustrate the frustration of dealing
with a foreign culture on its own terms, as a trip to the market illustrates:

_August 8, 1944:_ I had to wait over an hour for the bus—so much time here is wasted on the smallest detail! The stinking streets of the marketplace, filled with dirty native women and even filthier little boys who hang from the sides of passing buses. The gray, enervating skies make this life even more depressing, the resigned faces of the storekeepers, the dry wind swirling dust down the crowded streets. I arrive home exhausted.

Katja turns a critical eye on the Colombian’s place in the country’s economic system, her view sharpened by a life-long involvement in the German Communist Party. She emphasizes what she perceives to be the inequities of the capitalist system, especially in regard to North American and German imperialist industrial interests. During a weekend excursion on the Magdalena River, she writes:

_April 4, 1944:_ Girardot, a typically lively port city. Cheerful, charming like its inhabitants. Our guide, Isaac Moleno, seems irritated by our remarks about the industrial exploitation of his area. The factories operate night and day. We take an evening stroll through gloriously wide streets, look into spacious stores and well-stocked pharmacies. Indios are sitting on porchsteps, drinking, chatting. Everything is open even after eight o’clock—that would be unheard of in Bogotá!

Katja’s interest in Indio life, at first social in nature, came to encompass the artistic and the historical after meeting Dr. Petersen, an anthropologist studying Indio groups in the steppe regions of Colombia.

From Petersen we learn of an entirely new world, of the Indian tribes living in Vaupes, who have never come into contact with a white man. Petersen was the first for many of them. He brings back the most amazing artifacts—feathered costumes of such tender and highly artistic merit, such that one would believe in fairies’ handiwork. Rows of parrot feathers, tiny unidentifiable tropical birds, the coats of monkeys and even their tails included in the decorative costumes. The collection of such material year after year, the work laid down according to ritual and century-old tradition. Impressed but exhausted by Petersen’s presentation we head for home shortly after midnight.

Petersen’s comments opened to the Arendts the world of Indio art, the art which would later decorate their apartment, the art they would collect on numerous trips through Colombia. She writes of buying rugs for their home during a trip to the Magdalena River basin.
March 24, 1945: In El Banco, Erich disembarks and rushes off to buy the rugs this region is so well known for—in the esteras colors, gray, rust, black, and dark brown. He returns in half an hour, huffing and puffing, laden with half a dozen rugs. This makes our trip twice as rewarding!

Creating a Community

The chocolate business did not, however, allow the Arendts leisure time for extensive travel in Colombia. Although the work and the hours were demanding, Katja tried to maintain a balance between work and other, primarily intellectual interests. On the twenty-fifth of March they clean the kitchen and rearrange for new shelves to store the ever-increasing array of candies. She comments, “Who would have thought that the intellectual Arendts could have found such pleasure in building a business!” And, two months later, as the neighbors applaud their products, she writes, “We can hardly contain our pride—Milena Steuer, our neighbor with a private pastry chef, has decided to order our chocolates exclusively. He can’t match our quality! Just let someone call intellectuals good-for-nothing!”

August 11, 1944: Early today I made our first repayment to Mr. Ziehrer (HUCEM), who was impressed by my punctuality. He complimented me on the quality of our candies, which he had tried and liked. (He doesn’t even eat his own!) Oh, yes, how amazed one is in Bogota that intellectuals can accomplish so much. Erich comes home with some customers—Armenian Jews that seem interested and anti-fascist, something that is unfortunately not always the case with Jews. Eiger drops by in the evening to announce that he plans to have FOUR children—an amusing debate develops on the topic. Should one or should one not have children—psychic qualities, position, view of the world, lifestyle, the nomadic or the domiciled life. That leads us into a discussion of solidarity—in France, during periods of need, and just in general.

As indicated in the preceding quotations, Katja often describes the lives and ideas of those around her, people from her working world, or other emigrants establishing, like her, a new home for themselves in Bogota. Her diary entries meet the same standards set for her daily life, including accounts of occurrences, but also recording reflections. The world portrayed in her diary of 1944 is one of activity: she enthusiastically accepted a role as provider and worker, while still treasuring her time for intellectual challenge. Katja appears to be comfortably close
her community presence a forceful one. Emigrants who at first merely dropped in to purchase chocolates came to expect that conversations on art, politics, music, and literature would accompany the purchase, conversations Katja has carefully documented in her diary. Katja begins to offer intellectual, emotional, even financial support to other emigrants, inviting them into her home for meals, for discussions. As she writes on September 30, 1944,

Danielsohn comes by to say goodbye and thank us for the hours he's spent with us—for the music, the discussions, the circle of friends, our carefree approach to life. He envies us our influence, our opportunity to provide moral support. I am moved by his departing gift to me—two volumes of Beethoven's music for my future piano.

Katja and Erich also appear to have cared for children, although the couple was childless. Katja lists ten names as "theirs," Marcelo, Joergen, Karin, Stella, Anna, Elvira, Juan, Herminia Teresa, Gerda Carmen, and Luz Marina. Although Katja never expands upon the relationship between the couple and the children named, she does, on August 17, 1944, mention one of "her" children specifically.

Luz Marina Neira Camargo—our child—is one year old today. We gave her clothes and toys; she seems so happy. We wrote a letter to her father, General Neira, telling him to increase her food allowance—until now he has refused, since he is not "obligated." I delivered goods to Frau Dr. Herrenstadt, and we discuss our Mexico trip and the return emigration of so many of our acquaintances. They do not want to return, not at any price, since they claim anti-Semitism and anti-German feelings must be rampant in Europe. I couldn't help thinking, "And not in South and North America?" (In New York there are entire business areas, hotels, beaches that don't permit Jews to enter, even neighborhoods where Jews are denied apartments and business space!) These people just don't think things through, with their petty bourgeois limitations.

Katja entertained often, and she was also invited into many homes, always bringing along a dish for the various occasions, since she felt that the geographical and social isolation of life in Latin America could be heightened or alleviated by social events. From the viewpoint of a semi-professional cook, the meals she describes were events that intensified feelings of displacement or eased the strain of alienation, depending upon the company and the ambiance of the occasion.
March 12, 1944: I just had lunch with a neighbor, and we had the same dishes as usual. These unimaginative Colombians! Dry rice, tough meat, soup that tastes like dirty dishwater, the desserts always too dry or sickeningly sweet.

In June of 1945 she takes a trip to visit friends in a village outside Bogota and describes the domesticity she encounters there.

June 13: The Sanders’ garden house exudes such a European air—strawberry plants in bloom, figs ripening, a well-tended garden full of carefully potted plants. People in flight having found a sensible life, with pleasures in their responsibilities such as few people sense in Bogota.

June 17, 1945: While people are begging for bread in Europe, we are enjoying a feast! Canadian lobster claws, French truffled pate, Californian asparagus tips with mayonnaise, breast of chicken with Spanish olives, nut macaroons with whipped cream and candied pineapple, filled butter sponge cake in a rum truffle sauce, strawberries, cheese shortbreads, Freiburger pretzels, American egg-nog served ice-cold with Scotch, Chinese tea and real Madeira wine, a present from Eiger to Don Ottico. And almost everything prepared by the tireless Katja, as Eiger points out, his praise extensive.

The Salon Tradition Revisited

In addition to physical nourishment, Katja offered the emigrant community much-needed intellectual and spiritual support. She is a woman constantly serving, using her time to cement community feelings, and writing of such in her diary. In many ways, the Arendts’ home in the Avenida de Caracas became a gathering place for the intellectual elite of Bogota. Katja provided an ambiance lacking in Colombian society, an environment supportive of a free exchange of ideas, similar to the salon tradition of Europe. Like Henriette Herz and Rahel Varnhagen, who introduced the salon to Berlin during the romantic movement in Germany, Katja entertained the creative potential of an area and an epoch. Katja’s efforts parallel those of the previous century described by Hannah Arendt in her biography of Rahel Varnhagen. Like the Jews of nineteenth-century Berlin, the political exiles from Hitler’s Germany “stood outside society,” and Katja, as Rahel before her, offered “for a short time, a kind of neutral zone where people of culture met.” Katja provided emigrants a center of cultivated sociability: she had enjoyed an excellent education; she could speak several languages, played the piano and sang; Katja had even studied art in
several European cities. As her diaries indicate, she was well-read and delighted in conversation. It is not unusual, then, that she would attract the curious mixture of nationalities and ages, talents and interests making up the Bogota emigrant population. Diversity among her guests allowed for a curious cohesion: Katja united the visitors by creating an appreciative audience, by offering the supportive opinion of the well-educated European woman. In her home the free exchange of ideas so sadly lacking elsewhere could flourish.

As Katja writes on August 7, 1944, both she and Erich tried to provide this necessary haven for ideas.

This evening the Lewys came by, just to ward off depression. They are really nice people—he recites Rilke, Goethe, Klabund, Holderlin, an excellent delivery. We listen and stir chocolates until after 1:00 a.m. We can feel how they miss the appropriate circle of friends.

July 7, 1945: Three Rumanian Jews came to us late last night to purchase chocolates. It was raining, and they stayed to look at our art works, buying more and more candy and becoming ever more astonished about our knowledge of art. It seemed so unlikely to them that such experts could also produce chocolates for a living.

Another typical evening is described upon the occasion of Dr. Petersen's first visit to the Arendts' apartment in June 1945.

Petersen praises our painting “The Three Graces,” which he seems to prefer to the cat pictures by Bergmann and Moll. Those he finds “too busy, too constructionist” and thus artistically of less merit. Just as he is leaving, Bubi comes by and must listen to criticism from all sides. He manages to change the subject to the exhibition of American engravings currently in Bogota, and we start looking through our book The French Masters to find some of the works. Thus we launch into an invigorating discussion about engravings, finally concluding that they may never enthuse an audience as paintings can. (I mention sketches, since I spent ten weeks in Florence in 1934 studying Leonardo da Vinci's sketchbook.) By one o'clock in the morning, I am thoroughly exhausted! From 4:30 p.m. until 1:00 a.m. talk and tea—even the hardiest man would give in. I sometimes wonder how I survive here, life in such intensity, the constant strain of physical work. But, then we are both still relatively young, and only the high altitude, the unpredictable climate, and the lack of sleep produce our discomforts. At least we have managed to avoid the lifestyle of the bourgeois: playing cards, having children, and sleeping their lives away in the intellectually bankrupt Bogota.

September 28, 1944: We look at the photos from our trip, and the Spiegels are amazed at our ability to find beauty in everything—in a poppy, a wave, a
column, a withered bush. Erich reads from his poetry, and Danielsohn is beside himself with enthusiasm—that here in rotten Bogota a poet of such stature could exist. Katz listens without a word, and I wonder if he doubts such enthusiasm over a couple of rhymes. We talk about the young expressionist poets of Berlin 1923–26, about the Three Penny Opera, Toch, Hindemith, and Schoenberg, Shostakovich, Becher, and Bach. What was then rejected as bourgeois and is now cultivated as bürgerliche Erbe [bourgeois roots], even propagated. Seldom have we had such an interested crowd—these people have been buried for years in small-town Colombia, only working, not really alive. They must be starved for ideas, books, conversation! I was so exhausted when they left I could hardly fall asleep.

Reflections on the Past

As is evident in many of Katja’s comments, she often viewed occasions with a European eye. She brought to gatherings her traditional touch; a woman of over forty, she is established in her own art of entertaining, has and expresses certain expectations of situations she encounters. At times, she indicates no difficulty in adapting to her new host country, but she does not always exhibit total assimilation in the foreign culture, despite having overcome the usual linguistic hurdles. In fact, a type of flashback tendency becomes evident as the diary progresses, a trait familiar to readers of exile literature. Often, in encountering an unfamiliar situation, Katja would react by drawing upon past experience to interpret the new event. During her return journey from the Magdalena River basin, for example, Katja sees a remarkably beautiful sunset and thinks of opera.

April 17, 1945: A pink cloud evolves into a great dragon as night falls. Lightning flashes across the wide sky, and again I am attending a performance of Weber’s Freischuetz as the incantation is pronounced, “Samuel, appear!” Lightning shoots across the sky, flashing and scooting like the lightning bugs flickering along in their own imitation of the night sky. Cicadas begin singing, and it is loud enough to deafen the very stars. Frogs croak out their song as night birds flutter overhead. A new life begins, unearthly, and water buffalo moan into evening’s liquid darkness.

Overwhelming natural beauty is often described in Katja’s diary, as she travels on outings in the jungle or visits the steppe regions of Colombia. Once in autumn she associates a river valley outside Bogota with the landscapes of a famed German romantic painter. “Steaming
mists rise, making such a European landscape that I think of Caspar David’s autumn landscapes.” Just as the scenic surroundings elicit memories of her European cultural heritage, so could beauty invoking other senses cause Katja to recall her past. She often listened to classical music, which offered her, as other exiles, a small assurance that the culture which had betrayed her could still contribute to Western civilization in a viable way.

August 19, 1944: The day begins early—so much to do. While Mr. Blumenthal discusses modern music with me, I’m making truffles. Hindemith, Toch, Schoenberg (the first two I knew in my Mannheim years, when they would perform at the Schwetzingen music festivals, afterward they would talk with the great directors Furtwangler, Hoesslin, Kleiber, while we young folks sat and listened in amazement. How many new compositions were drummed out by fingers on white tablecloths after such meals. Such dear times of my youth. The three named were really nice people, although I found their music so barbaric, so strange. In the meantime it strikes my ear with almost classical beauty, I’ve become so accustomed to it. For a Bohemian meal of Palat Schinken, they performed concerts in our home—I remember baking Stollen, helping to shop for the meal, setting the table.

Nostalgia arose in those moments when a melody would trigger a memory, as in January of 1945.

We’ve been listening to the Beethoven Violin Concerto in D major, to Toscanini playing Mozart’s Adelaide Concerto, and to Beethoven’s Seventh. Today more than ever before I am affected by this music. How often I have heard it performed by Kleiber (my “Lover of the Rose” upon the Heidelberger Philosophenweg). As one ages, or rather, grows older, the depth of perception seems to be heightened, bringing a second youth.

Perhaps as a tie to the homeland, Katja thrived on music, rarely missing a performance by European groups touring in Bogota. She purchased a record player and even rented a piano for their tiny apartment. At cultural gatherings she sang or played the piano; Erich the violin. As was the case with other emigrants from Hitler’s Germany, classical music provided her with one part of her German heritage she was determined to preserve.

In addition to enjoying music, Katja read voraciously, and in her diary, she kept a record of what she was reading and how it affected her. The prose and essays of Jean Paul, the plays of Gerhardt Haupt-
mann and Friedrich Schiller, and the poetry of Rilke were among her favorites. Among American authors, Katja favored Hemingway and Huxley. She read French and Spanish as well as German and English. On rainy afternoons when the chocolates were slow in drying, Katja would select a book from the well-stocked library she and Erich collected in Colombia, and she would read until interrupted by the doorbell or other duties. She most enjoyed contemporary accounts of exile experiences, such as Anna Seghers’s *The Seventh Cross* or *Transit Visa*, works by fellow exiles such as the Mann brothers, Thomas and Heinrich (United States), and Johannes R. Becher (Russia). She read Spanish and Latin American travel books and works on classical and Spanish architecture when she felt depressed or especially homesick. Early in her diary of 1944, she writes:

*February 14:* I just finished reading *Between Two Worlds* by Sinclair Lewis [actually Upton Sinclair—ed.]. The style strikes me as poor, but since he describes the years of my own childhood (1919-29), the book fascinates me. He even predicted the current world war!

*March 23:* I’m reading probably the most objective and insightful book written about Hitler’s Germany in years—*The Last Train to Berlin* by Howard K. Smith.

Katja exhibits a very modern interest in film, discussing it as seriously as literature. She accepts cinema as an art form, not attending merely for the entertainment value. Films such as *Intermezzo* and *Casablanca* were delightful experiences for her. She writes:

*January 23, 1944:* I saw the movie *Casablanca* with Ingrid Bergman. It is inspiringly well-done, especially the “Marseillaise” scene. Such a film strengthens my own convictions, since I can see that worlds of personal conflict exist elsewhere, and not just in Bogota’s unbearable everyday grayness.

Katja even recalls events of European significance in regard to various sports and games, remarking as she and Erich engage in a vacation ping-pong match, “I haven’t played ping-pong since the world championship in Heidelberg in 1928. To think of all that has happened since then! Where could Ilse be now, Gretel, Edgar?” Obviously, the geographical separation from the homeland did not ensure mental or emotional distance in many cases. And, in her diary, she disproves the
to her two worlds—one of work, one of ideas—a position which made words of George Sand, one of the most widely read female diarists of the nineteenth century:

Writing a journal implies that one has ceased to think of the future and has decided to live wholly within the present. It is an announcement to fate that you expect nothing more. It is an assertion that you take each day as it comes and make no connection between today and other days. Writing a journal means that facing your ocean you are afraid to swim across it, so you attempt to drink it drop by drop.28

The Jewish Community in Bogota

Like her fellow Latin American exiles of German Jewish heritage, Katja could be described as an assimilated German Jew, should one consider her life before 1933. This degree of assimilation may be attributed to her upbringing, which she describes as “free-thinking.” In August 1945 she discusses her childhood.

Today my poor father would have turned seventy-four. Instead his life ended in poverty and deprivation just before his seventy-second year. And all due to Hitler’s insanity, under such dreadful conditions! I’ve been talking with Millie L. about raising children. She thinks even Jewish children should be presented with Christian ideology early in life. My father raised us without any type of religious instruction, and in an environment of total religious tolerance. Until I was twelve, I was free to develop my own religious tendencies, and by then, I could respond to religious instruction in school with my self-developed range of interests.

Katja joined the Jewish Women’s Club in Bogota, and she mentions other Jewish organizations in which she participated. She worked closely with Moritz Ziehrer, director of the HICEM in Bogota, until his death in 1945. They shared the profession of confectioner, and planned for the purchase of supplies together. He sometimes advanced Katja the capital to buy large quantities which she could not have afforded without his assistance. The HICEM provided the Arendts with a much-needed sense of security throughout their stay in Bogota.

Katja comments regularly on members of the Jewish community in Bogota, often associating Jewish families with a capitalist, middle-class mentality. Katja’s own political orientation is obvious—even before emigration, she sympathized with Marxist elements in German
society, and the Spanish Civil War episodes strengthened such loyalties. She is repeatedly critical of the Jewish emigrant community because its members disappoint her expectations of political exile. For Katja, emigration meant a change of political battleground—from Berlin to Switzerland to Spain to France, and finally Bogota. But for other Jewish exiles, emigration was the first political experience of their lives. Many Jews leaving Germany in 1933 had never participated in the political life of their homeland. This could cause two types of reaction to their Verfolgung (persecution): drastic alienation from the homeland, with emigration and new citizenship the ultimate goal, or retained ties to the lost and inextricably altered homeland. Traditions were either rejected or observed even more carefully than prior to emigration, newcomers gravitating toward those members of their host community who exhibited pride in being German, favoring a lost past and ignoring contemporary issues. Either assimilation in the present culture or loyalty to the lost culture could result. These were attitudes foreign to Katja and other political exiles, who sought assimilation in Colombian daily life only to the extent that they might assist anti-fascist campaigns in Bogota.

Of course, many local Germans, economically and socially established in Bogota prior to the outbreak of World War II, expressed loyalty to the National Socialist regime. Katja was surprised to find that some fellow Jews were not politically averse to financial dealings with such members of the city’s German community. She expresses little empathy for their lack of political insight, their need to escape into a secure daily life that she called bourgeois, thus nonpolitical, a life such as they had enjoyed in Europe. Katja visits a neighbor, describing the woman’s lack of historical awareness as outrageous, her pettiness as extreme.

January 8, 1945: After dinner I visited Frau Herrenstadt and returned her pie pan, filled with our own chocolates in reciprocation. How proud she seemed to report that her daughter is to marry an American. He is Catholic and expects his future wife to convert. Frau Herrenstadt is so relieved that her daughter will no longer be a pariah (a half-Jew). She will be starting over in a new country, a new culture, with her newfound financial security. (Frau Herrenstadt boasts that her daughter’s future husband just doubled their life insurance!) Oh, these cowardly, egotistical philistines—as if this “security” could not disappear overnight, just as during the post–World War I inflationary period.
Katja is aware, however, of the Jewish economic influence in Bogota.

September 18, 1944: They’re fighting 35 kilometers from Cologne! Bergmann comes by all excited, full of escape plans, for Cleves, his home city, is in danger. Some people in Bogota are sad to see us leave for Mexico. We take a walk through the Septima, all the Jewish businesses (and there are so many of them!) are closed for the New Year. That’s when one notices how influential the emigrant colony here is, such an economic factor.

Two attitudes thus disturbed Katja among her Jewish acquaintances in Bogota. She could not understand those who were attracted to the conservative elements, the established German business community that had close ties to Nazi Germany. And even less could she comprehend those who broke all ties to the homeland, hoping to merge with their Colombian neighbors.

Mrs. Selzer holds me up so long with gossip that I am missing all my other customers! She’s upset about the Nazi tendencies of the Jews here in Bogota, and rightfully so. She is Aryan, her second marriage is to a Jewish man, which opens her to criticism from both sides. Too bad that the spiritual and intellectual state of Bogota’s Jewish population is so pitifully unilluminated!

Anti-Semitism in the Bogota Population

Katja’s friends, family, her background and exile intertwine to present a portrait of the Jewish dilemma in Colombia’s exile community. Katja notes a lack of historical awareness, social pettiness, and greed in the German Jews of Bogota. And yet she repeatedly expresses concern about the anti-Semitism obvious in Colombian society. She especially notices Colombians for whom Germany was Hitler’s Germany, writing on March 24, 1945:

(On board a boat to El Banco) The passengers are primarily overweight Colombians, heavy, arrogant women gossiping indolently about the latest tidbit, men gesticulating wildly as they speak, all political infants. From all sides I hear effects of Nazi propaganda—it has infiltrated their thoughts so successfully. The more noise and agitation on board, the better these Colombians seem to like it!

Ann Twinam in “From Jew to Basque” has traced a twofold tradition of anti-Semitism in Colombia, one resulting from the Catholic
depiction of the Jews as murderers of the Savior, the other a cultural prejudice favoring the racial purity, or limpieza de sangre, that the Colombians considered incompatible with Jewish ancestry.\textsuperscript{29} Robert Graziani, in contrast, purports that the advent of anti-Semitism in Latin America resulted directly from German propaganda campaigns during World War II, arguing that, “Unfortunately, the ugly head of political anti-Semitism started appearing in Latin America in 1932 as the result of an intense German propaganda barrage, plus the work of highly indoctrinated communities in Argentina and Brazil, and of local fascist parties such as the Integralistas in Brazil, Acion Nacionalista in Argentina and Sinarquistas in Mexico. The Nazi theory of racial purity did not acquire large-scale support in countries of such mixed racial background, although its political aspects did infect a great part of the intelligentsia.”\textsuperscript{30}

\textit{Political Concerns}

During the Second World War, emigrants from Hitler’s Germany lived in eighteen of the twenty Latin American countries. In all but a few of those countries, victims of National Socialist persecution were offered a refuge. Best organized politically for the exile population were Mexico, Argentina, and Uruguay, which were centers of anti-fascist activity. By 1938, however, only Bolivia, Paraguay, and Colombia were still able to accept European emigrants freely—other Latin American countries had been forced to establish strict immigration quotas, as in North America. Most Latin American countries depended upon foreign capital, which affected their stance toward emigrants. Political activities by the emigrants were controlled, in large part, according to the financial threat they might pose to the host country’s economy. For example, German economic investments competed actively with American until 1939 in countries such as Ecuador, Colombia, Paraguay, and Uruguay, and the economic force was backed by a loyal political contingent. Hitler’s propaganda found fertile ground in those communities with economic interests. Hitler’s regime was welcomed by emigrant businessmen who had followed with fear the financial crises of the twenties. A fifth column, \textit{Die fuenfte Kolonne}, formed in Latin America with the outbreak of the war, loyal Germans carrying out espionage activities for the homeland.\textsuperscript{31}
The Arendts were members of numerous political organizations, and were especially active in the Colombian anti-fascist activist group called the Anti-Nazi-Freiheitsbewegung (anti-Nazi Freedom Movement). This group, the ANFB, elected Erich Arendt secretary, and as such he became the spokesperson for the organization before the Colombian government. The group met regularly to plan campaigns to fight National Socialist propaganda in Colombia. They planned programs to educate the native population about the current political situation in Germany, and they attempted to reach both the established immigrant population and the political refugees from Europe through their programs. The ANFB was prohibited in 1942 when the leadership of the Colombian government shifted from the conservative liberal dictatorship of Eduardo Santos to the radical liberal Alfonso Lopez. The Lopez government charged the ANFB with disloyalty, apparently in fear of economic repercussions among the still influential German industrial interests in and around Bogota. The members of the ANFB immediately formed a new group, reorganizing as the Colombian branch of Freies Deutschland, an anti-fascist organization with local chapters throughout North and South America.

Freies Deutschland in Colombia modeled itself on the most influential branch of the organization, that headed by Anna Seghers in Mexico. In its early months, it published a newspaper, which Erich and Katja edited. But, indicative of the lack of cohesion and support among group members, the newspaper soon failed. Erich continued to submit reports about the group's activities to the Mexican edition, and Katja continued to record the events of the meetings in her diary. Her reports are probably the only existing documentation of the group, since its formal meeting minutes were lost in 1948. As Katja records on November 29, 1944,

I interrupt my work to attend the FD evening. The first part of the program is pure poetry—Lewy reads from Rilke, Goethe, Holderlin, even from his own work and Erich's. The second part consists of Lao Tse, Claudius, Heine, Dehmel, and Erich again. Dr. Lamm sings, which doesn't exactly draw enormous applause, but all in all, it is a unique evening for Bogota. Afterwards we join the Lewys, Bleistein, Gruen (who has memorized all of Rilke's poetry) for coffee at the Palace. We discuss the potential for a German-speaking theater here in Bogota, and end up riding home with Werner Cohen at 3:00 a.m.

May 5, 1945: Erich has left for a meeting of Freies Deutschland: he returns with
Bubi and the three of us argue about the extent of anti-Semitism in the community. Bubi places all the blame for Hitler’s actions upon the Jews themselves! He claims they acted idiotically as a group. Of course, when other groups react with forcefulness, that is considered normal, but such action was not expected of the Jews. A smear campaign has started here against the Jews, publishing a magazine entitled *Frente Unico*, the United Front. It speaks out against both Jews and Communists, a topic of immense current interest. Erich leaves in mid-discussion to go to the cinema—they’re showing the first newsreels of the Jews’ release from concentration camps. He returns home depressed—people are actually fighting for seats to witness Hitler’s violent deeds enacted against the Jews.

**Current Events**

Closely related to the exile community and its efforts to fight fascism is Katja’s reporting of current events in her diary. She documents several measures undertaken to arrest the dissemination of fascist propaganda, and her remarks include reports of attempts to isolate members of Nazi agitational groups in Bogota. She provides a spontaneous interpretation of such events of historical significance, as when she writes, in 1944, of the detention camps set up in Colombia.

*March 23:* Yesterday those “dangerous Nazis” were brought to a detention camp in Fresugacuga, an idyllic village in the temperate zone. The inmates of their concentration camps certainly don’t have such an easy time of it!

*March 26:* We’ve been discussing the recent deportation of the Nazis, postwar politics, reports of soldiers attempting escape, rumors of Hitler’s death. Berlin is in an uproar.

Katja’s response to the Allied invasion of France in June of 1944 provides insight into the fears felt by so many distant Europeans. She echoes the anxiety of many who felt that the end of the war would bring annihilation rather than hope for new beginnings.

*June 6:* At three o’clock this morning there came a knock at the door—it was Anna exclaiming, “The invasion has started! Come quickly! News is pouring in from Mexico, England, Denmark, even Norway!” We crowded around her radio receiver to listen to the reports, hour after hour—who could sleep in the midst of such announcements!

Almost painstakingly Katja followed the events leading to the final unconditional surrender by the Germans. On May 3, 1945, she writes,
BERLIN IST FREI!” In celebration of the liberation of her favored city, she attends a ball at the Soviet Embassy. Only four days later, she is able to enter the word “peace” in her diary, writing,

Jean is at the door, shouting that peace has been officially declared. For some reason, we react calmly, not with the excitement one would expect anticipating the news. This war may be officially ended, but I think true peace is still very very far away.

As indicated by the preceding quotation, most of Katja’s information was reliable. Her neighbor, Anna Kipper, worked for Agence France as a radio operator and supplied the Arendts with the most accurate information available in all of Bogota. Personal news, however, took longer to arrive, and the emigres were not immune to the dangers of rumors and misinformation. From 1944, August 22, “Paris has fallen.” The following day, “Rumania has declared peace.” And, sadly, on September 1, “Today begins the sixth year of war.” But, as time progressed, not all the news was so distressing—some of it even called for a celebration, as on September 2, 1944, when, to celebrate the liberation of Paris, they eat canard a l’orange, drink a bottle of Neufchatel cooled in the stream, and read Johannes R. Becher’s poem “Paris.”

The End of the War

A post-peace depression seemed to settle on the emigrant community. Their identities were suddenly in need of redefinition, and the insecurity of the outcast seemed somehow heightened rather than alleviated by news of the war’s end. The Colombians celebrated, foreign dignitaries saluted the anti-fascist efforts, but the exiles like Katja began pondering their personal fate. On May 22, 1945, she writes:

My brother Wilhelm is forty-eight years old today. Is he still alive? Where could he possibly be, now that Berlin has been so completely destroyed?

September 6: Erich’s mother would be celebrating her seventy-fourth birthday today. Surely she is not still alive? If so, does she have anything to eat, clothes to wear? Berlin must be a city of ruins. Where could an old woman find shelter, how? No news for us, still no news . . .
Other exiles share her concern about relatives and their home countries, ravaged by war. Katja records part of a conversation with the Czerninskys, a couple that "would like to no longer be German—as if one could erase national heritage by changing citizenship!" She becomes impatient waiting for news of a possible return to Germany, exclaiming as she begins another volume of her diary, "I certainly didn't expect to start another notebook here in awful Bogota! It looks like I'll have to wait a little longer for departure." Other emigrants were beginning their plans for return, yet not all the news from across the ocean proved encouraging, as Katja states in November 1945.

Jacoby reports to us, beaming, that one can already return to Germany, to the Soviet Occupied Zone. The consul Antipoff has commissioned Erich to collect applications for return emigration and turn them in to him.

The Arendts did not seriously consider a return to the Western Zone, once they became active participants in recruiting exiles interested in returning to the Soviet Zone. But before their involvement with the Soviet Embassy began, the topic of return was a common one for the couple. With the first news of peace, Katja begins to consider possible locations, always asserting that her favorite second home would be the island of Majorca. Despite her dissatisfaction with the climate of Colombia, she did not want to return to the cold north, but rather to the sunny south, with its friendly people and an architecture she so greatly admired. As she writes on May 5, 1945:

We're at the finca with Lu and Don Ottico in Santerdicito, and everyone speaks passionately of peace. On the way here, we were spinning dreams of the return to Europe, for us to Spain. The Molls are also considering Majorca, although she would like to settle in Cadiz, "far from the worries of the world." Don Ottico seems determined to persuade her otherwise. If only Franco did not play such a major role!

May 28: It seems as if we'll be forced to wait even longer to hear of our return to Germany. Eiger comes by in the early evening, dressed in his usual absurdly sloppy dressing gown. He becomes aggressive, wanting to know why we aren't already back in Germany, where Erich could be functioning in some political role. I wonder whether he really is such a political ignoramus or just disturbed by the news from Poland. He has suffered such great losses!

July 31: Eiger comes by after midnight to discuss the results of the Potsdam Conference. We are waiting in suspense to hear more.
August 12: At 11:00 p.m. some of Erich’s friends arrive and start discussing Germany’s future. Will the country really be reduced to utter misery? How can seventy million people produce as much as the Allies are demanding—and in such a limited geographical area? A total cutback in industrial productivity is bound to result.

**Personal Repercussions of Exile Existence**

Sadly, Katja’s marriage suffered from the demands placed upon the relationship in exile. The marital problems began in the summer of 1944 and reached a climax in the autumn of 1945. The physical difficulty of adjusting to a tropical climate, the psychological isolation inherent in life in a Latin American community, and the lack of normal outlets for discourse, may have contributed to Katja’s marital problems. Katja, married to a man three years her junior, began to consider herself unattractive, too old and exhausted to appeal to a younger man. She began to doubt Erich’s loyalty, to question his fidelity; finally, in September of 1945, she entered a severely depressed state. In many instances, the loss of home and loved ones, the inability to regain social prestige or maintain a career in exile led exiled intellectuals to emphasize the negative aspects of their emigration. Minor problems could grow to major issues, and many successful writers, musicians, scholars, and architects suffered periods of depression during their exile years, discouraged by the sudden loss of such hard-won identity. Some even committed suicide.

Katja, experiencing a similar loss, that of her husband’s attentions, turns to her diary as a confidant during this difficult period, sharing her doubts and fears, her own tendency toward self-annihilation with the pages of the diary. Like Anais Nin, Katja comes to need the diary as a mode of self-reflection, a hiding place. “The false person I created for the enjoyment of my friends, the gaiety, the buoyant, the receptive, the healing person, always on call, always ready with sympathy, had to have its existence somewhere. In the diary, I could reestablish the balance.” The earliest indication of her insecurity is manifested on their fifteenth anniversary, when she writes:

*August 4, 1944:* The fifteenth anniversary! Fourteen years of marriage. From those, eleven lived in emigration. We are given red roses—has love survived
Katja is convinced that Erich is involved with a younger Colombian woman, a mulatto named Elida. As Katja becomes more and more certain of his interest in Elida, she begins to reject the native, the primitive aspects of Colombian culture, sensing that exactly those exotic elements are working against her traditional, established, European relationship. She attributes their sudden alienation from each other to Erich’s illogical longing for a primitive lifestyle, writing, “Poor Erich, I don’t understand these new primitive ways of his. Did Bubi influence him? Is it the hot climate? Am I suddenly repulsive because my skin is pale? His inconsiderate public lack of concern for me is humiliating!” She celebrates her forty-fifth birthday sadly, wishing for youth rather than presents.

*July 11, 1945:* For my birthday Jean plays a Strauss waltz on his violin, and Erich dances with me. He tires out even before the waltz is over—and he thinks he can keep a nineteen-year-old blonde negress happy? These men! But then again, it’s hard to overlook the altitude—2,600 meters above sea level does make a difference in one’s stamina, although I have plenty of energy left for dancing! In my present unhappily married condition I don’t feel like accepting the well-wishes and kind presents of our friends. Women should just vanish when they begin to age. Do men stay eternally young?

Health problems in the autumn of 1945 limited Katja’s ability to work. She developed a nervous disorder, sciatica, which would plague her for the duration of exile. Erich was not around to help, apparently spending his time with Elida. On the edge of frustration, Katja writes:

*September 1945:* Erich has brought me the string quartets of Beethoven, music such as one listens to on one’s deathbed. I ask him to play them—I almost feel like dying, forty-five-year-old women should probably just pass away.

Thoughts of suicide. Physical and mental weakness, depression—why keep on living if not needed?

Where is the Erich of our European years, trying times, too? He suffered then as he does now, but couldn’t we at least pull together to make the most of this? Our current occupation is discouraging at best, but is it any easier for me? We have an ability few couples possess—we receive such joy from our surroundings, we appreciate beauty as few couples can, since we recognize the value of beauty in this life.
Finally, late in September, Katja realizes she must get away from Bogota, and leaves for a week's sulphur cure in Uttica, realizing, "It is time for me to concentrate and collect my courage. I cannot be consumed by Bogota's suffocating atmosphere." She writes in Uttica:

In these early morning hours the warmth is very pleasant, the body relaxed, refreshed. A thousand thoughts go through my head. If only Bogota did not exist! No one, not even Erich, has any idea of the strain placed upon my life resources at that altitude. I am constantly exhausted, yet here I have regained the courage to continue. Even Erich's disloyalty appears as one isolated incident rather than the result of a totally altered psyche. I can begin to make plans for returning to Europe. Here I feel as if I were in Europe again. It will have to be the Mediterranean, not the cold, heartless North with its unfeeling, hurried masses.

The diary ends with the personal crisis unresolved. Katja returns to Bogota convinced that Erich's behavior has irreparably damaged their marriage, that she has seen an aspect of his character that she will always hate, a primitive nature born of the tropics.

Now there is a shadow over our otherwise so lovely togetherness, also in the erotic, which without trust and tenderness cannot exist for me. Erich clearly has a weak, vacillating nature, often irresponsibly so. I am filled with sadness—how I hate the tropics!

The Return

In spite of Katja's dreams of life in the Mediterranean, the Arendts, like many Marxist writers who survived exile in Latin America, actually returned to Berlin. Leaving Mexico were Egon Erwin Kisch and Andre Simone in the winter of 1946, Ludwig Renn, Alexander Abusch, and Paul Merker in the spring, Anna Seghers in 1947, Bodo Uhse in 1948. Other notable authors such as Paul Zech did not survive exile; he died in Argentina in September of 1946. Stefan Zweig committed suicide early in his Brazilian exile, in February 1942. The only other major German writer exiled in Latin America, Ulrich Becher, left Brazil in 1944 for New York, then returned to Berlin three years later. With the aid of the Soviet Embassy in Berlin, Paul Merker arranged for Erich Arendt's return visa in 1948. This proved to be cause for concern in the local government, and, due to their continued communication with the Soviet Embassy in Bogota and in Berlin, the Arendts were
subjected to treatment not dissimilar to that accorded North American counterparts who fell victim to McCarthyism. The conservative anti-Communist interests in the Colombian government treated Erich Arendt with the same suspicion that was directed at German exile authors such as Bertolt Brecht, who was examined before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Erich and Katja were followed by secret police, their letters from the Soviet Occupied Zone were at first censored, then confiscated. They received the permission necessary to emigrate in July of 1949; in December Erich was arrested and imprisoned for treason—he was suspected of aiding the people’s revolt against President Mariano Ospina Perez. Upon Erich’s release, the couple decided to return immediately to East Berlin: just as political issues had catapulted the couple into exile, so was the end of their exile determined by forces which they were politically powerless to alter. They boarded the Polish ship Sobieski bound for Germany in the fall of 1949.

Their return can be interpreted, because of the insights offered by Katja Hayek Arendt’s diaries, as evidence of an inability to adapt to Colombian life. The couple at first displayed a readiness to assimilate that few emigrants could have possessed—why, then, did they leave? In part because their country of exile could not make them feel welcome. As Judith Laikin Elkin points out, those fleeing Hitler’s Europe generally failed to acculturate in the Caribbean.

Though here and there a vagrant muse may be sighted on a university campus or in a radio station, nowhere in the circum-Caribbean did a muse of intellectual stature emerge. These republics spurned the opportunity to import and naturalize the creative talent Nazism cast loose upon the world.33

While all previous accounts of the Arendts’ emigrant life have centered upon the poet Erich Arendt’s sympathy for the Hispanic, his successful integration into and interpretation of the native culture, as revealed in his verse, Katja’s diaries reveal another side of the exile experience. Surely, men and women see things differently. The couple led two lives and enjoyed separate, distinct experiences. But, in expressing the commonalities of their exile years in Bogota, Katja’s reflections round out the personal implications of such a sojourn. Her journal reveals the dilemma of displacement and isolation that Erich’s romanticized verse
portrait of exile ignores. Whereas Erich's poetry offers the picture of the noble savage, extolling the purity of the primitive, Katja's diaries indicate that exactly this primitive element in Colombian society proved unacceptable over an extended period of time. Bogota's underdeveloped intellectual life could not supply the milieu conducive to continued creative activity, as is evident in a 1945 entry in Katja's diary, and that is why the couple returned to Europe.

With Petersen we reawaken the Marseilles memories—the insanity of visas and passports, surveillance by the fascist Vichy police, life in hiding. (For weeks Erich stayed in a cave outside the city, then with farmers in a barn, sleeping in the hayloft with only bread and water. Finally, I managed to bring him provisions secretly.)

The Lewys arrive for tea, and, while the men plan their poetry evening, we women discuss a thousand topics—how South American have we become? Will we be at home again in Europe? I am sure the Arendts will be, but anywhere but in the Mediterranean? We have become Latinized, never will we be South Americans—for that we're too sensitive, active, intense, art means too much to us. We could not take this monotony forever!

From the role of an outsider, an isolated observer, a German Jewish intellectual woman, Katja has recorded the impressions, the struggles of one ready to live out exile in an active, productive, heroic manner. She returned with Erich to Europe with like determination, assisting him in the first translations of Neruda, Paz, Guillen, and Alberti into German. She revived the salon milieu in their small Berlin apartment, bringing to the East its first taste of the tropics with long evenings of poetry readings, again preparing the dishes she had enjoyed in Colombia, introducing to her visitors exotic Latin American utensils and a faraway world revived by the Indio art and artifacts lining the walls.

By the mid-sixties, however, the Arendts had decided not to continue as a couple. They never legally divorced, but lived apart from each other for the final twenty years of their lives. Erich received continually increasing recognition for his literary efforts; Katja slipped into obscurity. Sadly, her life did not end with rewards well-earned, but rather with a lingering illness. In part due to physical weakness resulting from illnesses contracted in Spain and in the tropics, Katja's last years of life were spent under medical care in an institution outside East Berlin. She died in 1983, Erich in 1984. The few examples of her
personal correspondence collected at present indicate that she continued to keep a diary, although these records of Katja’s life are, for now, at least, irretrievable. They are assumed to be in the possession of the Academy of the Arts of the German Democratic Republic, and, as such, currently inaccessible to readers in the West.

And yet, a few who knew the Arendts remember Katja’s message. Fritz Raddatz, a leading West German critic of Arendt’s poetry, in his recent account of the Arendts’ early years in Berlin, touches upon Katja’s contribution. Noting Erich’s leading role in the literary beginnings of the German Democratic Republic, he attributes to Katja the communication of a new world, an exotic culture, a refreshing, exhilarating free way of life.

They were messengers from another world, living anything but a middle-class existence. They were un-German—from red wine with cheese, to Gershwin and the Indio art decorating their modest apartment. They typified that confusing combination that once meant BERLIN: upper-middle-class education, commitment to Marxist ideology, an intellectual wakefulness common to Jewish citizenship, the tastefulness of an indulged generation.3

In the Colombian diaries of Katja Hayek Arendt, the message reaches future generations: even “in the darkest and heaviest days of history,” the attempt was made “to hold on to an island of humanity, no matter how small.”

Notes
2. Two typed diaries entitled “Kolumbien 1944” and “Kolumbien 1945” were among materials sent by Katja Hayek Arendt to the Germanist Gregor Laschen in 1978. Laschen attributes their authorship to Katja Hayek Arendt in his editorial note to Reise in die Provence, ed. Gregor Laschen and Manfred Schloesser (Berlin: Agora, 1983). The diary, written entirely in German, is over two hundred single-spaced, typed, legal-length pages. All quotations included in this article are my own translation.
3. Katja’s name appears (“mit Katja Hayek Arendt”) on one volume of Rafael Alberti’s work which the Arendts translated into German in 1959, and on one prose work about the islands of the Mediterranean, published in 1961. She actually assisted Arendt until their separation in the sixties by writing the first draft of all translations from Spanish to German, and gathering material for their three photographic documentaries, most notably a volume on Colombia, Tropenland Kolumbien.
4. The Sturm-Kreis, founded prior to the First World War by the poet Herwarth Walden, consisted of expressionist writers such as August Stramm, Lothar Schreyer, Otto Nebel, and Kurt Schwitters, who published their works in the group’s journal, Der Sturm. Arendt came to the
group in its later years, publishing poetry in in the journal between 1925 and 1927. The group dissolved with the advent of National Socialism, since most of the members turned from expressionism to agitational or political poetry.

5. Many German writers joined the Republican effort by enlisting in the International Brigades; the best-known were Theodor Balk, Willi Bredel, Eduard Claudius, and Budo Uhse. Writers such as Anna Seghers and Egon Erwin Kisch visited Spain to report on the Civil War for European newspapers. Most German authors supporting the Republican cause identified in their involvement a determination to defeat fascism, if not in Germany, then in Spain.


7. HICEM was an organization founded in 1927 to aid Jews emigrating from Europe. It offered support in many forms to refugees from Hitler’s Germany between 1933 and 1945.

8. I am indebted to Gregor Laschen for permission to quote from these diaries prior to their publication. All quotations are by day and year of entry, because Katja Hayek Arendt did not number the typed manuscript by page.

9. Rudolfo Moll (Don Ottico) and his wife Lu were artistically inclined friends of the Arendts who often invited them to spend the weekend on their *finca* outside Bogota in Santerdicitó.

10. Alois Heider, born 1904 in Augsburg, Germany, was a neighbor of the Arendts and an economist; his name is often mentioned in the diary in connection with discussions about Germany’s economic future.

11. Walter Lewy and his wife Agnes often visited the Arendts. Although she apparently was not interested in conversations of a more philosophical nature, Walter had formerly acted with Max Reinhardt’s troupe in Berlin, and Katja enjoyed discussing plays with him.

12. Alfonso Lopez Pumarejo served two terms as president, from 1934 until 1938, and from 1942 until 1945. Eduardo Santos Montejo was president from 1939 to 1944. Both were members of the Liberal Party, but Santos was somewhat to the right of Lopez. During his administration, conservative elements interested in the economic benefits of attracting industrial and agricultural specialists from Germany, and opposed to Lopez’s restrictions on immigration, worked to strengthen ties to the German National Socialist Party. Approximately 15 percent of the 2,500 German citizens living in Colombia in 1938 were members of the NSDAP.

13. Erich Arendt’s poetry presents a romanticized portrait of the Indio as the noble savage, a statement clearly contradicted in Katja’s diaries.

14. Eiger was a businessman of Polish descent, who often confided in Katja his worries about his family still in Europe.

15. Helmut E Pfanner in *Exile in New York: German and Austrian Writers after 1933* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983) describes the humiliation felt by intellectuals forced to accept lowly positions and a subsequent drop in social status during exile. Although he extols the merits of exile wives, whose support of their husbands often began before leaving the homeland and continued throughout the exile years, he dismisses their efforts somewhat flippantly when he writes, “Low-paying jobs were more acceptable to the 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” (p. 83).

16. Hannah Arendt writes of Rahel Varnhagen that “her conduct and her reactions became determinants for the conduct and attitudes of a part of cultivated German Jewry, thereby acquiring a limited historical importance... for a brief time everyone who counted in society had
turned their backs on the social rigors and conventions, had taken flight from them. The Jewish salons in Berlin provided a social area outside of society, and Rahel's garret room in its turn stood outside the convention and customs of even the Jewish salons." Hannah Arendt, Rahel Varshagen: The Life of a Jewish Woman (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974).

17. Rilke, Goethe, and Holderlin are the three most widely read of German poets, each sharing a claim to classicism, each encompassing other movements, such as romanticism, as well. Klubund is a lesser-known expressionist poet and dramatist whose work indicates an interest in Asian themes.

18. Bergmann, a local artist and friend of the Arendts, painted Katja's portrait in 1945. Katja most often refers to him as "Bubi," probably a nickname from the German word for "little boy," Bube. He painted cat pictures and tropical landscapes, some of which hung in the Arendts' apartment.

19. These photos are included in Tropenland Kolumbien [The tropical country Colombia] (Berlin: Brockhaus, 1954).

20. Dr. Otto Spiegel (1880–?) had been a physician in Kiel prior to exile in Bogota. He treated Katja for attacks of sciatica, a nervous disorder.


22. Karlos Katz (b. 1906) was a mechanic from Berlin.

23. The buergerliche Erbe to which Katja refers is the tradition in German letters of a body of literature aimed at the middle classes rather than the intelligentsia. During the Second World War, socially engaged writers again took up the cause of reaching a wide audience, in hopes of achieving political goals. Arendt moved from his initial stance of art for its own sake to regard his art, poetry, as a weapon, writing exile works that could be accessible to many readers, not just to an intellectual elite.

24. See works by Anna Seghers (pseudonym for Netty Reiling) for examples of the flashback technique in exile literature.

25. Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826) was a composer in Breslau, Prague, and Dresden. His opera Der Freischuetz, which had its premiere performance in 1811, enjoyed enormous popularity, and still symbolizes the German heroic ideal.

26. Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840), a German landscape painter of romantic school.

27. Erich Kleiber, director of the Berlin State Opera from 1923 to 1935, at which time he emigrated to Latin America. Apparently he was one of Katja's beaus in Heidelberg, where they took walks along the Philosopher's Path, the Philosophenweg.


32. The Potsdam Conference, the third meeting between the Allies to decide Germany's post-war political and economic status, took place in August of 1945. Significant for the Arendts was the division of Germany into four occupied zones, with Berlin situated in the Soviet Zone.

34. Fritz Raddatz, “An alle Scheiben blutig klopfen” [To knock on panes with bleeding fists], Die Zeit, April 7, 1978, p. 15.

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Professor Lou Silberman said (AJA, November 1986) in a comment on our recent article, "What's the Matter with Warsaw?" (AJA, November 1985), that Harriet Levy may have thought of her family as "Pollacks," but no member of his mother's family, who were from Inowroclaw, Province of Posen, did so, because for them "Posen was Prussia." The professor believes that while Warsaw "was... a problem for those who were 'passing' as Germans," Jews from the Prussian-occupied Polish province of Posen did not need to escape the Polish label, since they felt themselves to hold an alternative Prussian identity. Certainly, Polish Jews were unfairly looked down upon. Inowroclaw was Polish then, though occupied, and is Polish now, as it has been for about seven decades and from time immemorial.

In Germany, in the 1840's, when Western Poland was occupied by Prussia, the Berlin Jewish publication, Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenturns said: "The Polish Jew is the dirtiest of all creatures," and in America an early B'nai B'rith lodge of Chicago "declined to accept Polish and Russian Jews as... they were not yet civilized." No wonder that Poseners preferred to be thought of as Prussians rather than Poles, and as Silberman said, they "spoke German [certainly in America] not Yiddish, although they also had their own Posen Judisch," which is a Yiddish dialect.

There is a telling point to the words of California editor Victor Harris, who observed at the end of the nineteenth century that poor Jews "remained Polish all their lives, while those who acquired wealth are taken into the German coterie."

In 1862, writing in his San Francisco weekly, the Gleaner, Rabbi Julius Eckman defined Polish Jews as consisting of "Prussians, Poles and English," the latter of whom were almost all from Russian or
Prussian Poland. As genealogist Dr. Malcolm H. Stern wrote in the National Genealogical Society Quarterly of March 1977: "Prussian Jews, most of whom came from the Province of Posen [were by German Jews] snobbishly referred to . . . as ‘Polanders’.

Silberman stated of his own experience that "one had only to be brought up in such a [Prussian Jewish] household to recognize how fatuous the German-Pole distinction is.” He suggested that we “had built more on Harriet Levy’s [Polish Jewish] self-identification than is called for.” We suggest that given the prejudice against Eastern European Jews held by their German brothers, Polish Jews from Posen and elsewhere in Prussian-occupied territory softened the blow of discrimination for themselves and their children by Germanizing their background.

New York Jewry’s historian Hyman Grinstein correctly stated that many who were Polish Jews “came from the Province of Posen, which was at that time, an appendage of Prussia. Despite this German affiliation, the Jews from Posen were always called Polish . . . apparently they had not been ‘Germanized’ in their old home.” Dr. Arthur Hertzberg wrote that “many of the . . . mid-century German Jews turned out to be Polish-Prussian Jews who had ‘assimilated’ somewhere on their journey to the supposedly more prestigious identities.”

In San Francisco and the rest of the early West, some Polish Jews took on a Prussian-German identity to aid in the Americanization process and to enjoy the benefits of American-Jewish Germanic society, adding to it Jewish scholarship and piety. Silberman’s family, who worshipped at Sherith Israel of San Francisco, used the Polish minhag (rite), which was the common heritage of all Polish Jews in a synagogue which was well known as the Polish congregation.

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

Although it may have been unwise for me to have attempted to answer Stern and Kramer's rhetorical question, I could not have anticipated their irrelevant and condescending response. My modest suggestion was that their emphasis on "the main subethnic rivalry among Western Jews... between the Germans and the Poles," "Prussian-occupied Poland," and "German Jewish snobbishness" did not entirely reflect all of the realities of Jewish life in San Francisco. The Jewish inhabitants of the Grand Duchy of Posen, as it was incorporated into Prussia after the Congress of Vienna, were effectively Germanized in the several generations before they were granted Prussian citizenship. Thus they did not think of themselves as Polish Jews, although they may have been thought of as such by the Jews of non-Prussian German states such as Baden and Bavaria. This, indeed, may have been carried over to San Francisco. Certainly the existence of two congregations in 1850 indicates that distinctions did exist, although the primary distinction was that between Minhag Ashkenaz and Minhag Polin. That Sherith Israel used the latter ought to occasion no surprise. So did most north German and English (other than Sephardic) congregations.

Messrs. Stern and Kramer did not have to exert themselves to demonstrate the existence of prejudice against Polish Jews on the part of Yahudim, i.e., south German Jews. I have no argument with that. All I suggested was that in the minds of the members of Sherith Israel congregation they were Poseners or Prussians, not Poles. The same could be written of Heinrich Graetz, the historian, born in Xions, Posen; Leo Baeck, the theologian, born in Lissa (also called Polnisch Lissa), Posen; and Ismar Elbogen, the liturgical scholar, born in Schildberg, Posen. All one needs do is walk through the older section of Home of Peace cemetery and read the inscriptions to understand this.

Warsaw, as I noted in my previous comment, was another story. Jews from that region could not think of themselves as Prussians, hence the problem for the two families mentioned in the first article. Parts of the Greenberg family were members of Congregation Emanu-el and had achieved some social prominence, hence a Warsaw, i.e., Polish, connection may, I surmise, have been embarrassing. In the case
reported by Kenneth Zwerin, it was his maternal not paternal family
that was involved. As he indicated in a letter to me, his great-uncle, son
of the deceased, was applying for membership in the Concordia Club.
For anyone who knows the San Francisco Jewry of the time, no more
need be said.

As to the minor point whether Posen Judisch is Yiddish and whether
that proves anything, I leave it to the experts. Suffice it to write, it was
ornamental, not “mama loschen.” Incidentally, the south German
Jews had their Judisch, too.

Finally, I do not wish to sail under false colors. My father’s family
was a latecomer to San Francisco, arriving from Cleveland, Ohio, in
1906, after the fire. My paternal grandparents were members of Con-
gregation Beth Israel, the Geary Street Shul, a left-wing Conservative
synagogue with an organ, whose rabbi, M. S. Levy, educated in Jews
College, London, was a member of the Central Conference of Ameri-
can Rabbis. His brother, J. Leonard Levy, was rabbi of Rodef Shalom
in Pittsburgh and represented a rather radical wing of the Reform
movement. My parents belonged to Congregation Emanu-el rather
than my mother’s family’s congregation, Sherith Israel, because my
father disliked Rabbi Jacob Nieto. Of course, my knowledge and un-
derstanding of San Francisco Jewry is anecdotal, nor archival, hence
hardly fit for historians’ consideration.

There is a talmudic adage, *kinat soferim tarbeh hokhmah*, “the zeal
of scholars increases wisdom.” This does not mean that civility is an
unnecessary commodity in scholarly exchange.

Lou H. Silberman
A Critique of
Leonard Dinnerstein's
"The Origins of Black
Anti-Semitism in America"

Stephen J. Whitfield

Professor Leonard Dinnerstein's contribution to the November 1986 issue of *American Jewish Archives* is so pockmarked with conceptual and methodological problems that the temptation to respond is irresistible. Initially presented as a paper before the Organization of American Historians and presumably to be woven into a larger study of national hostility to Jews that Dinnerstein is co-authoring, "The Origins of Black Anti-Semitism in America" merits second-guessing of how a professional historian of his stature ought to have treated so intriguing and delicate a subject.

Confining himself largely to the period before the urban interaction of these two minorities in the 1930's, Dinnerstein claims that specific sources of Black animosity "built upon a layer of previously enunciated prejudices" that both Protestantism and folklore had promoted. The religion of the white majority had depicted Jews as the killers of Christ; the traditional beliefs of Euro-Americans had sanctioned the myth of "the cunning and exploitative Jew whose ruthlessly amassed fortune is used to acquire political and economic control of society. . . . These stereotypes had existed among Blacks since their socialization into American culture" (p. 113). The husk of the article published in this journal presents evidence of Black acceptance of such negative stereotypes, drawn from Afro-American folklore and newspapers, and from spokesmen, intellectuals and observers from Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. DuBois, James Weldon Johnson, Richard Wright, and James Baldwin.

Though the evidence itself is incontrovertible (and could no doubt be enlarged), its meaning has been misconstrued; and the author's failure either to understand it or to give it a context amounts to a
serious misrepresentation of Black attitudes toward Jews. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, American bigotry—toward Blacks as well as toward Jews—reached its most disgraceful nadir. Rich Jews were being snubbed in hotels and resorts and denounced in the fringes of Populist rhetoric, while poor Jews were feared as incarnations of filth, disease, and political radicalism; and all Jews were in some ways subject to discrimination and to stigmas deeply embedded in Western civilization. The patrician Henry Adams's feverish nativism is far better known than the revulsion of his fellow historian Frederick Jackson Turner to Boston's ghetto, "fairly packed with swarthy sons and daughters of the tribe of Israel—such noises, such smells, such sights! . . . The street was . . . filled with big Jew men . . . and with Jew youths and maidens—some of the latter pretty—as you sometimes see a lily in the green muddy slime. . . . At last, after much elbowing, I came upon Old North [Church] rising out of this mass of oriental noise and squalor like a haven of rest." Such estrangement gripped other citizens whose dream of a redeemer nation was suddenly imperiled.

This was the atmosphere that Dinnerstein's article ignores, the atmosphere that Americans of that era breathed. It would be astonishing if Black Americans would be utterly immunized against anti-Semitism, would be utterly unaffected by the suspicions and anxieties that at the turn of the century added up to racism. Though Dinnerstein does not indicate why he expected Blacks to have exempted themselves from this mentalite, and though he does not claim that previous historians have denied the presence of Black anti-Semitism, his own evidence discloses no special animus in Black attitudes. Indeed none of the examples that he cites is as virulent as Henry Adams's own Ju-deophobia; none parallels the visceral disdain that Turner recorded in 1887. And since Blacks in this period were powerless, unable to try to ban Jews from public places, or from colleges, or from country clubs, or (through immigration restriction) from the country itself, Black antagonism often amounted to folk tunes (which are as old as "Hugh of Lincoln," which was far more sinister), or to children's name-calling (as when Horace Mann Bond—not yet a teenager—responded with "Christ killer" after an even younger Jewish boy repeatedly called him "Nigger"). Any historian conversant with the force and
scale of bigotry in the decades of mass immigration should be less
struck by instances of Black anti-Semitism than by how shallow and
how feckless they were.

But a more disturbing conceptual error mars Dinnerstein’s article,
which inadvertently demonstrates that half-truths may be more mis-
leading than falsehoods. Any generalization about Black antipathy
toward Jews in this era constitutes a half-truth because Dinnerstein
ignores the flip side. He treats Black admiration and envy of Jews as
though such feelings did not exist, though their connection to negative
stereotypes was hardly fortuitous or irrelevant. Consider James
Weldon Johnson’s claim that “the two million Jews” exercised a “con-
trolling interest in the finances of the nation.” Dinnerstein is respon-
sible enough to quote what Johnson added—that Blacks could therefore
“draw encouragement and hope from the experiences of modern
Jews”—without realizing that, since the remark reflected a positive
stereotype, the thrust of Dinnerstein’s own article is undermined.

Booker T. Washington admired Jews, and also hoped that his fellow
Blacks would emulate the Jews’ “unity, pride, and love of race; and, as
the years go on, they will be more and more influential in this coun-
try—a country in which they were once despised.” He added: “It is
largely because the Jewish race has had faith in itself. Unless the Negro
learns more and more to imitate the Jew in these matters, to have faith
in himself, he cannot expect to have any high degree of success.”
Washington joined in the protest against the Kishinev pogrom, saw in
the struggle of the ancient Hebrews a model for escaping from the
house of bondage, came to appreciate the extent of Jewish suffering
and of the Jewish “yearning for learning” as well, and even cited as his
favorite Shakespearean passage Shylock’s stirring defense of Jewish
humanity. Washington’s glowing praise of Jews did not necessarily
reflect intimate knowledge, but it was hardly the idiom of an anti-
Semite. And yet thus impugning his reputation is the only way that
Dinnerstein can see him, thus wildly distorting the actual attitudes of
“the wizard of Tuskegee.”

Dinnerstein’s portrait of W. E. B. DuBois is similarly marred by
blindness toward evidence of positive attitudes, whether in dedicating
his autobiography (!) to the memory of Joel Spingarn or, writing of
Jewish organizations, in urging Blacks to “look at them with admira-
tion and emulate them." DuBois was especially impressed with the Jews’ "magnificent clearness of . . . intellect" and their "fineness of family life." As early as 1919 he announced that Pan-Africanism "means to us what the Zionist Movement must mean to the Jews," and he continually upheld the right of the Jews to return to the Holy Land to reestablish a state. Included in Dinnerstein's useful endnotes are works in which other historians have presented the complex shadings—the ambivalences—that do justice to their subjects. But the scholarship of Louis Harlan, Arnold Shankman, and David Hellwig has neither modulated nor qualified the simplistic portraits of Black leaders and intellectuals that Dinnerstein has painted.

Such carelessness is unlikely to ease the task of calibrating and understanding the phenomenon of bigotry. Its components have included superstition, ignorance, perversity, greed, hypocrisy, resentment—pretty close to the entire run of human vices. But it would be a mistake for any historian to assume that religious and racial prejudice is concocted entirely from hallucinations, that it is without any factual tether. Sometimes stereotypes may persist because enough individuals may exhibit—or seem to exhibit—characteristics ascribed to the group to which these persons belong.

Take, for example, the reputation clinging to Jews for financial cunning and "money-grubbing." Some Blacks noticed these traits in some Jews; some white Gentiles noticed these traits too; indeed some Jews discerned avarice in some of their fellow Jews as well. By failing to acknowledge that keen and often crude economic aspirations motivated many Jews (for which the causes could be traced), or by failing to hypothesize some empirical warrant for the impression many Jews somehow conveyed, Dinnerstein can account for Black acceptance of such stereotypes only in terms of malevolence, or perhaps ignorance. It is therefore ironic—and unfortunate for his argument—that Professor Selma Berrol's article on Julia Richman and the Eastern European immigrants in New York, in the very same issue of American Jewish Archives, concludes that the wealth and status of the German Jewish elite made "our crowd" a model for the downtown Jews: "The clear example of thousands of Jews who had achieved prosperity and of a few who had become very rich in America was worth a hundred civics lessons" (p. 174). Or does Dinnerstein believe that the spectacular
economic ascent of the Eastern European Jews in America was due to some sort of absent-mindedness, or accident, or adherence only to Micah's plea "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God"?

But however tinctured with social actuality, stereotypes are not easily eroded; and Dinnerstein has sought to explore "The Origins of Black Anti-Semitism in America" because it would be "somewhat ahistorical to explain later conflicts and resentments toward Jews on the basis of current events." The intense animosity that has surfaced in recent years was grounded in a "heritage of suspicion and distrust [that] made Blacks particularly alert to any real or suspected act of treachery on the part of Jews with whom they came in contact" (p. 120). Although no interpretation that is ahistorical would evoke much enthusiasm among readers of this journal, Dinnerstein's assumption is highly dubious. Novelties do occur in history; breaks and innovations do interrupt and alter the flow of events. That, in my opinion, has happened with Black anti-Semitism, whose most recent eruptions derive very little authority from the traditional myths of deicide nor even perhaps of economic cunning that Dinnerstein has located.

The line of contemporary hostility that begins with, say, Malcolm X and extends to Louis Farrakhan has been incorporated into a Third World ideology that defines the United States as the chief source of evil on the planet and Israel as the chief source of evil in the Middle East. Although this viewpoint is not ashamed to draw upon ancient myths about Jews, its emphasis is geopolitical, and is usually collectivist in its social aspirations. It has often been scarred by the cruelties of American racism and is animated by a solidarity with Black Africans, Arabs and other peoples of color. How implausible then that this Third World orientation owes much, if anything, to Dinnerstein's targets—to the accommodationist Washington, to the NAACP's Johnson (and DuBois), et al. It is even less likely that Black Muslims and other contemporary anti-Zionist ideologists have drawn upon the ballads and folklore of Jews as Christ-killers.

But the absence of any overt intellectual indebtedness is not the only reason to be skeptical of Dinnerstein's assumption about continuity. For recent Black anti-Semitism exhibits some distinctive features. In the four decades since the end of the Second World War, bigotry has
dramatically declined in the general American population, and hatred of Jews is so disreputable that not even Jesse Jackson would want “He Warned Against the Jewish Conspiracy” inscribed on his tombstone. But anti-Semitism has persisted—and even grown—among Blacks, especially younger Blacks; and its correlation with levels of education seems to be positive rather than negative. Such peculiarities pose a special challenge to communal defense agencies, and therefore ought to give pause to any historian who takes for granted a continuity between slave spirituals (“De Jews done killed poor Jesus”) and the current association of ideological hustlers with Arab propagandists who are content to round up the usual suspects.

In his essay on “The Idol of Origins,” Marc Bloch warned against the ambiguity in the very word that preoccupies historians. For “origins” can mean merely beginnings as well as causes, and prior episodes can be misleading guides to subsequent conduct and belief. Unfortunately Dinnerstein’s article is ensnared in this ambiguity. Avoiding it means noticing dissimilarities as well as parallels, and specifying the sequences of events and beliefs. Defining contexts as well as selecting texts, and delving deeply into intricate veins of thought rather than strip-mining it for quotations, are surely more promising procedures if both past and present are to be mastered.

Professor Dinnerstein replies:

The essay that I wrote attempted to look at the origins of Black hostility toward Jews that has surfaced in the United States periodically since the 1920's. I suggested that "some of the resentments expressed by Blacks had enough real bases in fact to warrant the protests." But I also pointed out that "these outbursts of anger erupted in so wide a variety of different and changing contexts that other factors besides those articulated may have sparked the numerous attacks." Among the discoveries in my investigation were threads of anti-Jewish sentiment codified in religious belief and folklore that have continued to infuse contemporary Black anti-Semitism.

Professor Whitfield's critique appears to be uninformed on several levels, but perhaps nowhere as much as his use (and abuse) of stereotypes. On the one hand, he tries to persuade us that positive stereotypes, can be... well, positive. Black leaders who encouraged other Blacks to emulate Jews were, in his view, using stereotypes favorably. The fact that stereotypes, both positive and negative, are unfair because they attribute uniform, and often inaccurate, characteristics to all individuals in a group, is not acknowledged. Rather this use of "positive" stereotypes is offered as an indication of a lack of prejudice.

Perhaps more disturbing is his suggestion that negative stereotypes of Jews reflect a reality and that "sometimes stereotypes may persist because enough individuals may exhibit—or seem to exhibit—characteristics ascribed to the group to which they belong." Whitfield then mentions the most stereotyped notion of all—Jews as "money-grubbing" individuals. Does Whitfield accept this as a rationale for anti-Semitism? Is this not a little bit of blaming the victim, and also some Jewish self-hatred? It strikes me as a little more than just insensitive when Whitfield passes over James Weldon Johnson's comment in 1917 that two million Jews had "a controlling interest in the finances of the nation" without acknowledging the falsity of such a remark. This is the kind of attack Jews have suffered from over the centuries. Many anti-Semites, Black and white, have harbored the notion that Jews control the finances of the world.

When Whitfield turns to a review of the attitudes of Washington and DuBois, he relies too heavily on both their public statements and
those that they made after their causes were recipients of Jewish philanthropy. A more accurate assessment must include their private and earlier views. First let me state that all of my material about Washington comes from the writings of Louis Harlan, whom Whitfield commends to my attention. Both Washington and DuBois praised the Jews after they began receiving help from wealthy Jews for their projects: Tuskegee Institute and the NAACP, respectively. Harlan wrote that in his early years Washington shared “with other rural and small-town Americans of his day a rhetorical anti-Semitism that identified Jews with the crossroads storekeepers who exacted high prices for goods bought on credit and charged usurious interest for crop mortgages.”

It was also Harlan who wrote, “Washington also habitually sprinkled in his speeches mention of Jewish country storekeepers as oppressive usurers.” And Harlan stated as well that “in his effort to secure donations to his school it was in his interest to drop the prejudice against Jews that he had earlier expressed. Once Paul M. Warburg was elected to the Tuskegee Institute Board of Trustees generous contributions started coming in from Jacob Schiff, James Loeb, and Felix Warburg, among others. Then a noticeable shift began in Washington’s public utterances about Jews which were extremely praiseworthy. But in private he wrote to his business manager, on October 17, 1904, “I very much fear that we are getting our trade too much centered in the hands of a few Jews. Whenever we can get equally fair treatment in prices and quality of goods from persons other than Jews, I prefer to have our trade scattered among them.”

DuBois also started out with negative stereotypes of Jews and did not seem to change them until after the establishment of the NAACP in 1909 and that organization’s growing need for financial assistance. Many Jews did aid the NAACP financially, and some, like Joel and Arthur Spingarn, gave of their own time and efforts to promote the goals of the organization. But earlier DuBois claimed to have seen (and later admitted he had not) Russian Jews deceiving Blacks in Georgia, and devastated plantations “out of which only a Yankee or a Jew could squeeze more blood from debt-cursed tenants.” Furthermore, it was DuBois, even after the NAACP received financial support from some well-to-do Jews, who wrote in The Crisis (September 1933), “Nothing has filled us with such unholy glee as Hitler and the Nor-
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dics. When the only 'inferior' people were 'niggers' it was hard to get the attention of the *New York Times* for little matters of race, lynching, and mobs. But now that the damned include the owner of the *Times*, moral indignation is perking up." In 1953 DuBois changed the most despicable comments about Jews that he had written in 1900, and acknowledged as well that "I am not sure that the foreign exploiters to whom I referred in my study of the Black Belt, were in fact Jews. I took the word of my informants."

My last response to Whitfield has to do with his rejection of the idea that there are continuities underlying earlier and contemporary Black anti-Semitism. To prove his point, he jumps from the early twentieth century to the 1960's and beyond. In doing so, he ignores the anti-Semitism of the 1930's and subsequent decades. Anti-Semitism positively exploded in the Black ghettos of the North during the depression decade somewhat earlier than it accelerated among white people. Lunabelle Wedlock, in fact, surveyed a variety of Black communities and wrote in *The Reaction of Negro Publications and Organizations to German Anti-Semitism* (1942) that most Black newspaper writers of the 1930's "are either indifferent to German anti-Semitism or view with evident pleasure the degradation of a minority group other than their own." Black newspapers commented about the increase of anti-Semitism in urban ghettos during World War II, and then in 1945 Tennessee's *National Baptist Voice* (May 1, 1945) observed:

> The truth of the matter is: Negroes are filled with anti-Semitism. In any group of Negroes, if the white people are not around, the mention of the Jew calls forth bitter tirades.

And one should not forget, either, that it was Ralph Bunche who wrote in 1941:

> In the home, the school, the church, and in Negro society at large, the Negro child is exposed to disparaging images of the Jew. . . . Negro parents, teachers, professors, preachers, and business men, who would be the first to deny that there is any such thing as "the Negro" or that there are "Negro traits," generalize loosely about "the Jew," his disagreeable "racial traits," his "sharp business practices," his "aggressiveness," "clannishness," and his prejudice against Negroes. There is an undercurrent of apparent resentment among many Negroes that the Jew is better off economically, politically, and socially than the Negro, that the Jew is not so universally "Jim-Crowed" as his Black brother in misery.
The Jew is not disliked by Negroes because he is "white," but because he is a "Jew" as the Negro conceives the Jew.\(^5\)

In conclusion, let me state that the goal of my article was to point out that contemporary events and encounters were insufficient to explain why Black anti-Semitism has erupted in recent decades and to offer some explanations of historical origins. No one is saying that there are not now, or have not been in the past, nativistic eruptions of far greater consequence than Black hostility toward Jews. It should not be necessary to state the obvious—that Blacks have been the victims, rather than the perpetrators, of much of what we have seen of American bigotry. At the same time, however, it is not amiss to indicate that minorities, for a variety of reasons, may absorb aspects of majority-group psychology and culture.

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Notes


Review Essay
Russian Roots, American Realities: Russian Jewish Historians on the East European Jewish Experience

Alexandra Korros


The study of Russian history, politics, and culture has attracted a disproportionate number of Jewish scholars, many of whom have become dominant figures in the English-language scholarship of their field. In the past two decades, Russian Jewish history has begun to flourish as young Jewish scholars have combined their interest in their own people with a thorough knowledge of the country’s history and politics. However, these historians have not tended to follow the historical paths of nineteenth-century Russian Jews as they emigrated to the United States and even to Palestine, but have left that task primarily to historians of American Jewry or Zionism. In recent years, however, at least three authors have sought to complete the crossing of the Atlantic and include both the Russian and American components of that migration in their story. This brief essay seeks to comment on an important new trend particularly as it pertains to American Jewish history—the attempt to view the transition from Russian Jew to immigrant American Jew from the viewpoint of the historical roots of the phenomenon rather than simply analyzing its development after the arrival of Russian Jews in the United States.
The three volumes under consideration vary greatly in their ambition and scope. Jonathan Frankel's massive, encyclopedic, and imaginative volume, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism & the Russian Jews, 1862–1917*, strives to bring together the highly complex relationships between the politics of socialism, nationalism/Zionism, and liberalism in Russian Jewry not only in Russia, but in its transportation to Palestine and America. Stephen Berk's *Year of Crisis, Year of Hope: Russian Jewry and the Pogroms of 1881–1882* seeks to assess the traumatic impact of the pogroms that followed the assassination of Alexander II on the Russian Jewish community, examine the reaction of the Russian imperial government, and describe the impact of the increased immigration of Jews to the United States. *Essays in Jewish Social and Economic History*, by the late Arcadius Kahan, edited by Roger Weiss with an introduction by Jonathan Frankel, is a volume collecting in one place the work in Russian Jewish economic and social history begun in the last years of Kahan's life. Kahan, too, viewed the immigrant experience in the United States as an intrinsic part of the story he wished to tell, and although he did not have the opportunity to address these issues in a systematic manner, three out of thirteen essays are devoted to American Jewish economic history.

In his *Prophecy and Politics*, Jonathan Frankel, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, considers the interaction of Russian Jewry with the various solutions to the "Jewish problem" in Russia—Zionism, Russian revolutionary socialism, Jewish socialism, and migration to the United States and other countries offering freedom to Jews. Focusing on the tumultuous politics of the Russian Jewish community from the era of reform under Alexander II to the shock waves of the Russian Revolution, Frankel studies the growth of Jewish socialism and Socialist Zionism within the context of the rising and fading hopes for complete Jewish emancipation in the Russian Empire. Frankel seemingly neglects no one, from the revolutionary Social Democrats who eschewed their Jewish identities to join the Russian people in toppling the tsar to the anti-socialist liberals—both Zionists and non-Zionists—who sought to build a Western constitutional state in Russia and/or Palestine. By the conclusion of *Prophecy and Politics*, Frankel has described the transformation of the Jewish question in
Russia from the Jewish effort to create an equitable socialist world for themselves in a non-tsarist environment into the Zionist effort to adapt those same socialist principles to create an equitable society for all Jews in Palestine.

Impeccably trained in Russian and Jewish history, Frankel is able to weave the strands of the Jewish involvement in revolutionary socialism, Jewish trade unionism, and social democracy, and their Zionist counterparts, as they developed in a Russia whose imperial government sought to modernize from above without letting go of absolute power. The assassination of Alexander II in 1881 and the traumatic pogroms that followed forced established leaders in the Jewish community and Jewish youth on the brink of revolutionary action to reassess their expectations for the emancipation of Russian Jewry. While some continued to seek solutions in the overthrow of tsarism and its replacement by a just “socialist” regime, many others transferred their socialist inclinations into movements with specifically Jewish identities and character. By the turn of the century, Jews constituted the most prominent minority in the revolutionary movements—whether as Bundists, Social Democrats, or Zionist socialists of the social-democratic or populist persuasion. After 1905, the “Jewish street” was the most crowded avenue in Russia, clogged with political parties of every stripe from liberal and/or Zionist liberal to socialist and/or Zionist socialist–populist and Social Democrat seeking the vote of the now highly politicized Russian Jewish community.

Not content to merely describe this phenomenon, Frankel focuses on various individuals whose lives articulated these political ideas. Beginning with the “first Jewish socialists,” Moses Hess and Aron Liberman, and continuing with Chaim Zhitlovsky—“Russian Populist and Jewish socialist”; Nachman Syrkin—“on the populist and prophetic strands in socialist Zionism”; and “Ber Borochov and Marxist Zionism,” Frankel describes the lives and writings of each to illustrate the complexities of their ideas and the way in which they resolved the contradictions between their Jewish and socialist personae.

Significantly, Frankel does not leave his reader dangling by referring to the continuing contradictions faced by these ideologies as they and their advocates emigrated to Palestine and to America. He follows his argument through by exploring the clash between “ideology and emi-
gre realities,” both in Palestine and in the United States. In his final chapter, “Class War and Community: The Socialists in American Jewish Politics, 1897–1918,” Frankel brings his sensitivities and training to bear on American-Jewish political life. He vividly describes the transplantation of the “politics of the Pale” to the American scene, paying particular attention to the political alignments of the Yiddish press, the struggle for the creation of the American Jewish Congress, and the adaptation of each immigrant generation (i.e., 1881–82, 1900, 1905–1907) from the disciplined and centralized Russian environment to the freewheeling atmosphere of American Jewish life.

The proliferation of political viewpoints, the lack of ideological control and conformity which free political expression fostered, resulted in an even wider spectrum of Jewish political opinion and organization than could have been imagined in the Russian Empire. The Yiddish-socialist press sought to build up cadres of well-informed socialist agitators whose job it would be to mobilize Jewish radicalism and turn it to productive ends aimed at improving the conditions of Jewish workers. In analyzing the intellectual content of that mobilization, Frankel notes how the materials published in the press constituted what “would have been considered ideal for revolutionary ‘propaganda’ in the conspiratorial [Russian] worker circles” (p. 465).

Frankel illustrates how in an America where Jews were intensely preoccupied with building their new lives, Jewish politics stirred only in the wake of crisis—the Dreyfus Affair, the Kishinev Pogrom, the pogroms of 1905–1907, and the First World War—and in a new direction—“the politics of philanthropy” instead of the politics of “self-liberation” characteristic of the Pale. Like its counterpart in the Pale, the Jewish labor movement was predominantly “internationalist” in outlook, but in times of crisis—the pogroms of 1905–1907—its nationalist wing would become dominant as American Jews sought to help fellow Russian Jews. Yet, political unity was elusive, since mass support tended to appear only in times of grave danger to the Jewish community in Russia.

The First World War provided a prolonged emergency situation, and in Frankel’s view, the politics of the American Jewish community was forever changed as a consequence. The challenge to the “establishment”—the American Jewish Committee on the one side, and the
proletarian Forverts-Bundist bloc on the other—came from the push by both the Federation of American Zionists and the Socialist Zionists to establish an American Jewish Congress. Frankel ably illustrates how the fight over the Congress finally transformed the politics of the Pale into an American Jewish politics.

While for a short time it seemed as though there could be some basis for unity in the American Jewish labor movement, the growing legitimacy of Zionism (and Labor Zionism in particular) tended to override the now weakened Jewish Socialist Federation’s leadership of the American Jewish labor movement. Reflecting the preferences of its readership, the Forverts became more favorable to Zionist policies, while the more extreme internationalist wing was drawn to the new revolutionary regime created in Bolshevik Russia.

Rather than changing the structure of American Jewish political life, the radical Jewish immigrants adapted to it. The compromise on the creation of an American Jewish Congress indicates how attempts to transport revolutionary ideas developed in Russia led to their Americanization as their advocates moved from “Jacobinism” to “federalism.” The American pattern of a decentralized, grass-roots, fragmented structure, nurtured in an atmosphere of political freedom, overcame the centralized model of revolution imported from the Russian Empire. Frankel thus completes his story, giving his readers valuable insights into the shaping of American Jewish politics from the view of its immigrant component. In telling his story, Frankel has, perhaps, used too much detail, yet in doing so he has created an extremely important history uniting many seemingly diverse components into an exciting and complex tale spanning three continents.

In Year of Crisis, Year of Hope Stephen Berk focuses on the pivotal year that changed so much of modern Jewish history. He has succeeded in placing the Jewish response to the pogroms in the context of Russian events as well as in the framework of Jewish history. While Berk relies on the work of historians such as Frankel to place his material in an appropriate context, he also utilizes the periodical press to analyze the varieties of Jewish response to the pogroms.

After briefly sketching the background of Jewish optimism during the reign of Alexander II (1855–1881) and the new opportunities that the tsar’s liberalized policy brought to Jews, Berk discusses the social
and economic causes of the pogroms themselves—not as a planned anti-Jewish conspiracy, but as the outcome of the social and economic dislocations in both Jewish and Russian societies occurring as a consequence of the Great Reforms of the 1860’s. His evaluation of imperial Russian Jewish policy in the wake of the 1881 disturbances underlines the ambivalent response on the part of a government traumatized by Alexander II’s assassination. Were the pogroms caused by the same revolutionary groups that had murdered the tsar, or were they spontaneous outbursts directed against the Jews rather than against imperial authority? If the latter, then the best course would be to blame the Jews for their own misfortune.

In examining the revolutionaries’ response to these events, Berk emphasizes the widely held radical belief that mass movements, including pogroms, had legitimate popular socioeconomic, not religious, roots and had to be supported as proto-revolutionary outbursts in advance of popular support for the anti-autocratic movement. Even Jewish revolutionaries like Paul Aksel’rod, a leader of the nascent Russian Social Democratic movement, then in exile in Switzerland, felt it necessary to rationalize the outrageous behavior of the peasantry and urban proletariat and subordinate his anger in the name of the revolutionary cause. Yet, Berk does not mention that once it became clear that pogroms would not lead to mass uprising, the Social Democrats forever more condemned them as reactionary evocations initiated and abetted by the autocracy.

In his last chapters Berk explores the Jewish responses to the pogroms, utilizing the press as a barometer of reaction on the part of the articulate and politically oriented segment of the Jewish community. Berk suggests that the most popular response to the pogroms, however, was that of the Jewish masses who “voted with their feet” and began what was to become a massive migration from Russia to America, Western Europe, Australia, South Africa, and eventually Palestine. In these last chapters, Berk’s extensive utilization of the press serves him most successfully. He is able to illustrate the whole spectrum of response in the words of the leaders of the Jewish community. He introduces the reader to those advocating an immediate departure for Palestine; those who continued to hope for a change of heart in the Russian government and elected to remain, but who would never
again hope for complete rapprochement with Russian society; those who now translated revolutionary/populist goals into a Jewish return to the land; and those who sought to convince Tsar Alexander III and his ministers to desist from anti-Jewish legislation and defend the property and lives of his Jewish subjects—the shtadlanim, or "Court Jews," of St. Petersburg.

Of greatest interest to American historians is Berk’s summary of the Russian government’s reaction to emigration; the response of the Jewish intelligentsia to this mass phenomenon; and finally the American Jewish community’s fearful, ambiguous, and often quarrelsome response to the migration itself. Berk combines first-person descriptions of the conditions encountered by the emigrants in Brody, aboard ship, and on arrival in Castle Garden with editorials from the American Jewish press and presents an account of the squabbles among the major Jewish organizations about what to do with these “barbarian” Jews from Eastern Europe: how and where to settle them, how to finance that resettlement, and how to assimilate them into the American Jewish community with the least disgrace. He also paints a vivid picture of the confusion and fears on both sides as the Russian Jewish emigrants arrived in the “Golden Land.”

By the end of this brief monograph, the reader has developed a picture of the general conditions of Jewish politics, the views of the various Jewish political factions, and the activities of the various groups who encouraged self-defense, emigration abroad, the settlement of Palestine, or remaining calm and hoping for a change of heart. Berk’s extensive footnotes and brief bibliographic essay will be of assistance to those who wish to delve further into some of the provocative issues raised in this volume.

Year of Crisis, Year of Hope summarizes and explains the major issues behind the pogroms of 1881 and the new directions in Jewish politics that arose as a consequence of these events. In a sense it is an introduction to the more complex and detailed issues raised by Jonathan Frankel and other scholars who have delved extensively and in greater detail into the political and social repercussions for Russian Jewry in prerevolutionary Russia. This volume is a fine introduction to these issues despite some minor errors—e.g., the dates of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78 are incorrectly listed. Overall, students as
well as general readers will be enthralled by the complex singular consequences of the pogroms for the history of Russian and American Jewry.

Arcadius Kahan did not have the chance to organize this collection of his last essays on Jewish social and economic history into any systematic form. Nevertheless, it is significant that Roger Weiss, who edited the volume, included the three essays on Eastern European immigrants in the United States. Clearly Kahan saw the activities and economic patterns of development in America as being on a continuum with Jewish economic activities in the Pale, and the essays were not simply thrown in to fill up the volume.

Three broad themes dominate this collection: the economic history of Jews in the Pale during the nineteenth century; the economic history of Eastern European Jews in the United States; and Kahan’s personal evocations of his life as a young Jew growing up in Vilna and the issue of Jewish identity in the Soviet Union. The essays on American Jewish immigrant life link up with Kahan’s earlier essays on Russian Jewish economic themes, which included the themes of industrialization, urbanization, internal emigration, and rapid population growth and how they changed the fabric of Russian Jewish economic life at the end of the last century. In the first essay devoted to the American experience, “Economic Opportunities and Some Pilgrims’ Progress,” Kahan explores the characteristics of the highly skilled Jewish immigrant labor force that arrived in the United States from Eastern Europe between 1890 and 1914. He contends that each of the three cohorts which he identifies in these years reflected the economic and social transformations characteristic of the Russian Jewish working population as they too moved from artisanal work to employment in factories and from rural to urban areas in the Russian Empire and the United States.

Furthermore, Jewish laborers tended to work for Jewish entrepreneurs. This “symbiosis” of employees and employers tended to produce low wages, low search costs, but also low barriers of entrance into entrepreneurial activity. In the United States it created a competitive industry in which old cohorts were constantly moving up while new immigrants were always able to find work in jobs vacated by their upwardly mobile predecessors. Kahan is careful to note that while
many of his facts about the immigrant occupation pattern in the United States are available to the researcher, far more are yet to be discovered. He demonstrates, for instance, that it was only in the beginning of the twentieth century that the number of professionals in the immigrant Jewish community began to increase, but adds that “more than economic factors were at work in encouraging young immigrants to overcome various barriers blocking the way to careers in the professions” (p. 112), and suggests that there is still much work to be done in identifying those factors. This essay is a preliminary attempt to outline the areas for future research and to suggest some of the central unexplored problems which pertain to the immigration of East European Jewry.

In the second of his three essays, “The First Wave of Jewish Immigration to the United States,” Kahan briefly explores some general features of Jewish immigration in Western Europe as well as the United States. The last of the three essays, “Jewish Life in the United States: Perspectives from Economics,” offers the reader a wealth of statistical information pertaining to Jewish life in the twentieth century up through the 1970’s. At the outset of his second essay, Kahan aptly summed up the main point of the present review essay, identifying what is apparently an important trend for historians of East European Jewry.

It is in this spirit that Kahan, Frankel, and Berk have contributed to American Jewish historical writing. They have, with varying successes, crossed the Atlantic to finish their stories and allow American Jewish historians to take up the threads, beginning the story anew. This effort, in and of itself, is a laudable one and particularly appropriate when considering the American Jewish experience in its broadest dimensions.

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Correction
In the April 1987 issue, Professor Herbert Paper's review contained two errors.

The first word of the third paragraph from the bottom of page 99 should read *Shamus*. The biographical sketch of Professor Paper should mention that he is the co-editor of a forthcoming critical edition of the entire works of Sholem Aleichem in their original Yiddish.

Like most writers of national anthems, Naphtali Hertz Imber (1856–1909) was not much of a poet. Although he published three volumes of Hebrew poetry, he holds a minor position in the history of modern Hebrew literature. In Imber’s case, there were some extenuating circumstances. Modern Hebrew literature was still in its early adolescence when he began writing and could boast of only one important Haskalah poet, Judah Leib Gordon. Imber belonged to that dusky period which followed the decline of the Haskalah but had not yet seen the dawn of the national revival in which world-class writers like Mendele, Berdichevsky, Bialik, and Tchernichowsky would shine.

But what Imber lacked as a poet, he possessed as a literary type. Dubbed the first Hebrew Bohemian, he took on the persona of the itinerant romantic poet: solicitous and arrogant, alcoholic and witty, half-charmer and half-charlatan, he was able to captivate such diverse personalities as Laurence and Alice Oliphant, Israel Zangwill, and Judge Mayer Sulzberger. He was above all driven by an exaggerated self-confidence in his literary and scholarly talents, and this drive was undoubtedly reinforced by his rather sorry attempts to eke out a living by means of his pen. These two motives led him not only to write in Hebrew and Yiddish, which he knew well, but also to publish a considerable number of poems and essays in English, none of which are of high intellectual or literary value but do convey to the reader insights into the extraordinary man and the milieu in which he operated. In a moment of candor Imber confessed: “I have written on everything, everything. I know almost nothing about the subjects on which I write.... Psychology is only science, all others are fakes, and I can fake as well as anybody” (Hutchins Hapgood, *The Spirit of the Ghetto*, [1902], p. 290).
Imber began publishing in English at the instigation of Israel Zangwill, during his London period (1888–91), in an Anglo-Orthodox periodical, the *Jewish Standard*. He continued to do so after he came to the United States in 1891 until his death in 1909. Historians of American Hebrew literature have until recently neglected this rather large corpus of work. Eisig Silberschlag was the first to call attention to these works and has written several articles describing their content, the most significant being “Naphtali Hertz Imber” (*Judaism* 5, no. 2 [Spring 1956]: 148–159). Imber’s flirtation with the American Populist movement has been described by Lloyd P. Gartner (“Naphtali Herz Imber, Populist,” *Michael* 3 [1975]: 88–100) and Gad Nahshon (*Molad*, n.s. 7, nos. 39–40 [1980]: 189–196). Galia Yardeni Agmon has examined Imber’s relationship to the Oliphant family (“The Diaries of Naphtali Herz Imber,” *Zionism* 1 [1975]: 265–336, cf. her article in *Molad*, nos. 187–189 [May–June 1964]: 41–50).

Jacob Kabakoff, who has devoted much of his scholarship to the history of Hebrew literature in America and has written several articles on Imber’s Hebrew and Yiddish works, has ferreted out most of Imber’s English articles, a scholarly feat that required many hours of painstaking searching through obscure Jewish periodicals.

In *Master of Hope*, he now presents us with an intelligently compiled anthology of these pieces subsumed under the following headings: Autobiographical, Selections from Imber’s “Picture Gallery,” Cultural and Mystical Comment, Ramblings and Musings, Familiar Essays and Observations, and Historical Writings. The selection is prefaced by a scholarly introductory essay which is both biographical and critical. The volume closes with a bibliography of Imber’s works, including a list of his English pieces and a select bibliography on Imber.

Kabakoff’s introductory essay is well-enough written but regrettably much too short. He is, certainly, most qualified to do a longer biocritical article on Imber, or does he hope to publish a book-length work on him later?

There are certain enthralling periods in Imber’s life which bear further investigation. First of all there is the intimate relationship which he forged with the Oliphants. Unorthodox, utopian mystics, the Oliphants proposed a belief in a bisexual deity and were excited by
Imber's insistence that such ideas appear in rabbinic and particularly kabbalistic literature. Imber's knowledge of both Rabbinics and Kabbalah was not as profound as he claimed, but he mixed a rather fruitful imagination with the education of a stetel iloy (gifted student) and with a few dashes of sycophancy, and convinced the Oliphants of the Jewish origins of their mystic fantasies. The Oliphants, influenced by Christian socialist utopian movements, were among the first to favor the liberation of women. Jewish women's rights advocates of our day might be pleased to discover that the author of the Jewish national anthem was in their camp. They will even be surprised to learn that Alice Oliphant assumed the name of Lilith, Adam's purported second wife, who had refused to be subjugated by the first male chauvinist. Imber, who was well-versed in Jewish lore, disapproved this adulation of Lilith, being quite aware that Lilith is the archdemon of Jewish folklore, a terrible, Kali-like vampire who kills and eats newborn infants. Anne Taylor in *Laurence Oliphant* (Oxford University Press, 1982) refers to two sources which are not mentioned by Kabakoff: the Columbia University Archive Box 1 (is this an Imber file?) and the Broadlands Archive, which contains Alice Oliphant's letters. One wonders whether these could shed further light on Imber's relationship to Alice Oliphant and the reason for his sudden departure from his mentors' home at Usufiah (Mount Carmel).

While Kabakoff refers to Imber's involvement with American Populism (p. 17) and his publication of two pro-Populist pamphlets, he does not probe this relationship. Lloyd Gartner tells us that one of the pamphlets was sent to Lorenzo D. Lewelling, the Populist governor of Kansas, and is on file at the Kansas Historical Society Archives. Walter K. Nugent, the historian of American Populism, refers to Imber: "In fact, a radical Jewish Publicist had heard so little about populist anti-Semitism that he sent the populist governor Lorenzo D. Lewelling a pamphlet beginning: 'Moses the Populist law-giver' " (*The Tolerant Populists* [Chicago, 1963]). The pamphlet in question was entitled *The Fall of Jerusalem: Reflections upon the Present Condition of America*.

I, for one, would have also appreciated some further elaboration on Imber's relationships with Reform rabbis such as Emil G. Hirsch and Jacob Voorsanger. Finally—why, oh why, is there no index to this
fascinating volume!

These comments are all inspired by this first-rate collection, and Jacob Kabakoff is to be congratulated for making this aspect of Imber’s career available to scholars and readers.

—Ezra Spicehandler

Ezra Spicehandler is Distinguished Service Professor of Hebrew Literature at the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati.
A character in Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes* notes that there are those who destroy the earth and those who stand around and let them do it. As a large and growing historiographic tradition now attests, the nations of the West were, *without exception*, in the latter category as far as the Jews of Europe were concerned. The United States and other Western democracies simply, as Vice President Walter Mondale put it, "failed the test of civilization." The two works reviewed here make that failure even more poignant, as they show, clearly and unambiguously, the kinds of things that could have been done to save many more Jews had there only been a will to do so.

Professor Sharon Lowenstein has written what will undoubtedly become the standard account of how 983 European displaced persons—all but seventy-three of them Jews—were brought from Italy to be “temporarily interned” in a special camp at Oswego, New York, in the summer of 1944. Hers is more than a mere narrative: she also shows us how the more ambitious plans of the War Refugee Board were whittled down to this small and unique operation and reminds us, once again, that whatever virtues Franklin Roosevelt had, effective compassion for the Jews of Europe was not one of them. Yet FDR was willing to do something, and had all his cabinet members been as vigorous on behalf of Jews as Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau and Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes, the “temporary havens” and other rescue schemes might have come to more. But the opposition of other cabinet members—chiefly War Secretary Henry L. Stimson and Secretaries of State Cordell Hull and Edward R. Stettinius and their subordinates—more than a few of whom were blatant anti-Semites—kept rescue attempts to a minimum. In her conclusion Lowenstein correctly notes that FDR was not willing to "take political risks" (p. 156) but does not spell out what those risks were. Without in any way exculpating the president, it should be noted that for him the real
“political risk” was not the loss of the 1944 election—if that were so there would have been a change after Dewey was defeated—but the loss of the postwar world. After almost four decades of sometimes mindless internationalist intervention, it is all too easy to forget how great was the fear of surviving Wilsonians like FDR that the United States would again retreat from its global responsibilities. As Charles A. Lindbergh, among others, had shown, isolationism had clear links to anti-Semitism. And while it is easy—and correct—to criticize timid government officials like John Pehle, head of the War Refugee Board, for not publicly confronting Roosevelt, Lowenstein needs to remind her readers—and perhaps herself—just how difficult it is for a subordinate to take on a charismatic leader at the height of his prestige and influence and in a time of crisis.

There are a very few minor errors in this carefully and well-written book. It is not correct that the administrative arrangements whereby the War Refugee Board was responsible to several cabinet officers made it “unique among government agencies” (p. 153). FDR liked such diffusion of power and utilized it from early in the New Deal. The camp at Oswego was under the auspices of the War Relocation Authority, whose major responsibility was Japanese Americans. It seems to me that Lowenstein overpraises that agency—although compared to the State and War Departments it was clearly on the side of the angels—and makes two separate slips about it. Its first head, Milton S. Eisenhower, did resign, but not “in protest” as that term is generally understood, and Dillon S. Myer was Eisenhower’s successor but never his “principal aide” (p. 40). She might also have noted the parallels between the legal status of the Oswego refugees and the South American Japanese—largely Peruvians—who were also brought here and told that they would have to leave after the war. For a variety of reasons, as C. Harvey Gardiner has shown for the Japanese Peruvians,1 the vast majority of both groups eventually stayed and became U.S. citizens.

Ruth Gruber—upon whom Lowenstein draws—was a thirty-two-year-old special assistant to Harold Ickes in 1944 and went, as his representative, to escort the refugees from Italy to the United States and continued to work with and for them. Her memoir is a warm and valuable first-hand account of some aspects of the Oswego story. In
addition, *Haven* shows, as only first-hand accounts can, the temper of those times. She reminds us of what some revisionists forget: how even some Jews who knew some of the dimensions of the Holocaust made excuses for Roosevelt. “In restaurants and in the privacy of our apartments we told each other, ‘It’s Congress and the State Department who bar refugees. Roosevelt can’t act alone. He can’t have his New Deal labelled the Jew Deal’ ” (p. 24). Read in conjunction with Lowenstein’s book, it provides some flesh-and-blood experiences, makes us better able to understand not only what happened, but how some people felt about what was happening.

But Lowenstein’s *Token Refuge* is not just archival and library research. There is a long “Epilogue” (pp. 162–193), which begins with an August 1984 fortieth-anniversary reunion in New York and reviews the lives of many of the survivors, which, in attached appendices, she summarizes statistically. Most, she reports, tried, in 1984, “to avoid anything that smacked of criticism of a country to which they personally owe so much.” But a few, albeit anonymously, are critical, including one woman who told Lowenstein: “I see Cubans and others coming to this country and that is good, but I know that if we Jews needed help again the response would be the same” (p. 193). It is possible to argue with that conclusion but not with the justified bitterness from which it stems.

—Roger Daniels

**Notes**

2. Lowenstein says (p. 231) that the Signet paperback edition (1984) of Gruber’s book contains additional material growing out of this reunion.

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This work represents a significant contribution to American Jewish history on two counts.

First: on the whole, it is a meticulously documented examination of the leadership role of an eminent Southern rabbi. Morris Newfield's ministry may be viewed as a paradigm of the Reform rabbinate at its best; hence, it is remembered with affection and reverence four decades after his death. Though many community histories and rabbinic biographies tend to focus on the spiritual leader as a prime mover, none has investigated so thoroughly the confluence of historical events that prompted both deeds and decisions. Cowett's book outshines other works of this genre.

Second: Birmingham's Rabbi enriches Southern Jewish history. Patterns of communal interaction differ from other regions. The stereotypes that obtain among non-Southerners, fed by remembrances of segregation, the Leo Frank case, lynch mob rule, and KKK violence, have precluded a proper evaluation of the place of Southern Jewry. Newfield's period coincided with all the aforementioned aberrations, and yet he developed strategies for defusing bigotry, labored effectively for the cause of minority populations, and maintained a central leadership role in the Birmingham community. Since Eli Evans's The Provincials, an emerging body of scholars have examined the record, demonstrating the full integration of Jews in Southern society—not as the eternal strangers in the gate. It was predictable that more “affirming” Jews would function in the inner circle of the Carter administration than in any other presidency in this century.

A book of this scope challenges any author's imagination. The technical difficulties include: how to be inclusive of all aspects of the life and work without compromising continuity; how to balance oral records from family members with primary documents; and how to weave biography into a thematic framework. The author is more successful as an interpreter of the historical circumstances in which the rabbi functioned than of his life story. Further, he assumes that New-
field's mind was given to a "master plan": step one, win over the congregation; step two, reach out to the community; step three, gain influence in the state; step four, achieve power in the Central Conference of American Rabbis. The rabbi probably reacted as needs dictated and expertise allowed. The book unfolds in such a way as to portray Newfield as a manipulative power broker. That conclusion is unwarranted. Another insufficiency is the structural arrangement of the text. The life was of one thread. Newfield functioned as congregational leader, civic servant, social worker, and husband and father, at one and the same time. The exposition is by periods, with a specific category of functioning highlighted. The hard-edged divisions follow the line of the "master plan" that the author suggests motivated the rabbi's decisions and deeds.

A final comment. This reviewer believes that too little is made of the support and influence that came to Rabbi Newfield from his Southern colleagues: David Marx of Atlanta, Isaac Marcuson of Macon, and George Solomon of Savannah. In 1931, Newfield organized an Alabama state conference to promote cooperative efforts among Jews. Seven years earlier the same idea was initiated in Georgia by Rabbi Marx. Solomon and Newfield were not only classmates but were partners in a North Carolina enterprise, Camp Osceola. Generations of Southern Jews from the "best" families were nurtured by these leading Southern rabbis. As pioneers in fundamentalist Protestant environments, they turned inward for the courage to act and to each other. That aspect of the story is missing (as is the ordination picture of Rabbi Newfield, the earliest class picture surviving at the Hebrew Union College). One may boldly venture that the rabbinate of Morris Newfield paralleled the ministries of Marx, Marcuson, and Solomon (among others). They were "brokers" in the general community, anti-or non-Zionist in orientation, leaders in the HUC Alumni Association and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and advocates of social welfare causes. The value of this fine work would have been enhanced by a horizontal as well as vertical analysis. It would benefit us to know what dynamic enabled Edward Calisch in Virginia, Marx and Solomon in Georgia, and Henry Cohen in Texas, to function, like Newfield, as "Jewish Bishops" in their respective "medinas," and whether comparable models existed in other regions.
Birmingham's Rabbi merits eye-level space on the bookshelf of those interested in regional Jewish life. It satisfies the scholar's need for objective documentation, and the reader's desire for a well-conceived, interestingly written tome. A valuable bibliography (including newly discovered sources) and an ample index ensure this work permanence.

— Saul Jacob Rubin

Rabbi Saul Jacob Rubin is the author of Third to None: The Saga of Savannah Jewry (1983).

Any new study on Latin American Jewry is important. Unlike perhaps any other area within Jewish history, the Latin American Jewish experience has been so little examined that every additional work has something to offer, whether directly, as in new information or insights, or indirectly, as in the thoughts provoked by incomplete or tendentious scholarship. Donald L. Herman's *The Latin American Community of Israel* fills both these roles.

Herman, who teaches at the Grand Rapids campus of Michigan State University, has taken on, as he himself notes, an unprecedented task: to "focus on the Latin American Jews who have chosen to leave their countries and live in Israel." He attempts to provide the first comprehensive evaluation of this community of immigrants. To do so, he examines their lives in the homelands they left and their reasons for immigration, and he scrutinizes their new lives in Israel.

Herman bases his findings on a "twofold" methodology. First, he surveyed the general literature on immigration to Israel, including a 1981 Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics study entitled "Immigrants from Latin America One Year and Three Years after Immigration." Second, he conducted 150 interviews with Israelis of Latin American origin and arranged for several hundred Latin American immigrants and sabras to be interviewed by researchers of the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research. In his analysis, Herman divides all the interviewees into two groups, "pre-1974" and "post-1975," depending upon whether they arrived in Israel before or during 1974 or during and after 1975.

According to a Jewish Agency study Herman cites, some 100,000 Latin American immigrants were living in Israel by the late 1970's. He spends the first of his book's three chapters, the "Latin American Milieu," describing what they had left behind; and for Herman, what they had left behind was indeed unfriendly. Of the chapter's twenty-six pages of text, three are introductory and deal with population decline and weakening of community institutions, while another three treat the theme of Latin American nationalism and problems it poses.
for the Jews; the remaining twenty pages fall under the rubric of “anti-Semitism.” All three sections resound with pessimism.

Among the trends that Herman sees in Latin America is a steady decline in the Jewish population caused in part as young people, without the education or ethnic identity which formed the core of their parents’ Jewish identity, succumb to the forces of assimilation and nationalism. The Latin American countries, Herman indicates, are too unified, in the Church and in nationalism, to allow easily for the development of a Jewish identity which can coexist peacefully with a national identity.

Anti-Semitism, however, is the determinant factor for Herman in Latin American Jewish history. He traces well-known anti-Semitic incidents, such as the Semana Tragica in Argentina in 1919, and notes the anti-Semitic components in the rhetoric of several of the Latin American revolutions. He links the current anti-Semitism to roots in the Spanish and Portuguese languages and cultures and implies that today’s anti-Semitism grew from there.

He devotes several pages to the “Timerman Controversy,” carefully summarizing many of Jacobo Timerman’s own thoughts and views, then cites what many supporters and critics had to say during the period following Timerman’s release from prison and the publication of his book *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*. Ultimately, Herman agrees with Timerman’s analysis of Argentina as an anti-Semitic place and takes him one step further: “Timerman is wrong in one respect. Argentine anti-Semitism is certainly more encompassing than merely the military government’s attitude.”

Herman, who states that while he realizes Argentina is not Latin America it can nonetheless serve as a useful paradigm for the entire continent (to no small degree because over half the continent’s Jews live there!), paints a most unpleasant picture and leaves the reader, not with surprise that Latin American Jews have left and immigrated to Israel, but surprise that any have even remained in Latin America! As Herman sums up, “Anti-Semitism is a reality of the Jewish condition in Argentina and other Latin American countries.”

Herman’s second chapter is entitled “Reasons for Immigration.” He begins by providing a useful periodization of Latin American immigration to Israel.
Latin American immigration to Israel has passed through four stages. From the prestate to 1958, Zionist idealism was the principal motivating force; most Latin Americans settled in kibbutzim. The second stage, 1958 to approximately 1963, witnessed many early settlers moving from the kibbutzim to the cities. The new immigrant group comprised more business people and some professionals. During the period from 1963 to approximately 1975, the percentage of professionals increased; many Jews in Latin America experienced economic problems and bankruptcy in the 1960’s. The fourth stage, 1975 to the present (1983), witnessed a continuation of immigrant arrivals from the business and professional communities . . . joined by an increasing number of political refugees and others who have emigrated because of economic-political problems. As one might expect, other factors now compete with Zionism as important reasons for immigration. (p. 31)

Herman isolates a number of broad characteristics which can be applied to Latin American immigrants. For instance, while the pre-1974 immigrants were better prepared linguistically for life in Israel than the post-1975 group, Latin American immigrants overall “generally had a better knowledge of spoken and written Hebrew prior to immigration” than other groups and they were often less “religious” than other groups.

The reasons for immigration were acquired by putting both open and closed questions to the interviewees. They were first asked to “please state the three main reasons for your immigration to Israel.” “Zionism, history, Jewishness” was by far the most popular subject-category, being selected as the most important reason by 68 percent of the pre-1974 immigrants and 48 percent of the post-1975 immigrants. Other popular categories of reasons were “concern for children” and “wish for change.” Herman concludes that “the first main reason for immigrating to Israel may be classified as the ideological dimension, which includes one or another aspect of Zionist and Jewish identity. The prevalence of this dimension is many more times than that of any other reason mentioned as the first reason. . . . there is hardly any difference in the percentages of the other reasons mentioned as the first reason and this . . . emphasizes the gap between these and the ideological and identity dimension.” Analysis of most-cited second and third reasons confirm this conclusion.

Respondents were then asked to note which, on a list of fourteen influences, were “important” and “very important” in their decision to immigrate. The three leading answers in both chronological groups
were "meaningful life for children," "Zionist feelings," and "Believe one can lead a Jewish life only in Israel," each of which received at least 63 percent in either category. The next item on the list (except for one which dealt with intrafamilial relationships) did not score over 50 percent. Herman affirms that these data support the conclusion drawn from the previous group.

The book's third and final chapter is entitled "Life in Israel," and it attempts to compose a demographic profile of the Latin American immigrants as well as to determine whether or not their immigration was successful. Herman notes that the Latin American immigrants are a relatively young group, showing a higher proportion of people aged twenty-nine and under and a lower proportion aged thirty and over than in their country of origin. The Latin Americans are "fairly well dispersed throughout the country" and do not demonstrate, at least in the cities, a tendency to "cluster." The current trend is toward urbanization. Linguistically, as previously noted, the immigrants on the whole had a higher prior knowledge of Hebrew than other groups and had a smoother transition than most into its use as their main language.

In general, the Latin American immigration has been successful. Though most Latin American immigrants admit that such factors as housing and employment opportunities were better in their nation of origin, they are content with their present situation. Sixty-nine percent of the post-1975 group and 85 percent of the pre-1974 group state that they are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their present general condition. And a special survey of the latter group found that 87 percent of them "feel entirely at home in Israel." In conclusion, Herman states that "compared to most immigrant groups, the history of the Latin American community in Israel is a success story." He attributes this to a number of factors, emphasizing the youth of the new arrivals and their facility with Hebrew.

There can be no doubt that Herman's book is of great value. He has executed studies which have produced new information (information upon whose value and accuracy the Appendix on "intercorrelations among the variables" elaborates), and though analyses and conclusions based upon this information are often frustratingly absent, the data are presented clearly. Of lesser value, as I hinted at the beginning,
is that there is much information this book distorts and misrepresents. Through a closer look at this inappropriate treatment, we may arrive at a more discriminating understanding of its subject.

The basic contradiction in Herman's work is obvious. In the first chapter he, in no uncertain terms, describes Latin America as a dark, portentous, dangerous place for Jews to live. For him, Timerman's was the paradigmatic Latin American Jewish experience; a good man, made to suffer terribly for the crime of being Jewish. This all-pervasive anti-Semitism, Herman leads us to believe, is the raison d'être for the Latin American Jewish immigration.

As a former congregational rabbi in Latin America, and as a student of the history of its Jewish community, I know Herman is wrong. But what is really interesting is that so does he. He gives the reader expectations in the first chapter which are shattered in the second. And nobody explains this better than Herman himself in the concluding paragraph of the section on reasons for immigration:

A final point to consider is the discrepancy between the literature and the respondents regarding anti-Semitism. In the first chapter of this book we discussed at length the reality of Latin American anti-Semitism, particularly in Argentina. Yet neither the pre-1974 nor the post-1975 respondents mentioned it as one of the main reasons for immigrating, and it appears at the bottom part of the scale regarding both groups' perceptions of the influences that affected their decisions to immigrate, albeit to a somewhat higher percentage among the post-1975 respondents. Only 6 per cent of the open-ended interviewees mentioned anti-Semitism as one of the reasons for immigrating. Those whom I spoke to acknowledged the reality of anti-Semitism, although some, like the Brazilians and Chileans, said it was insignificant in their countries. Others admitted certain professional and social doors were closed to them, but they did not see this as a particularly significant problem. The Argentine immigrants acknowledged that anti-Semitism existed in the country, but they maintained it did not touch their daily lives and it did not influence their decision to immigrate. (p. 47)

The contradiction clamors for attention, but it falls upon deaf ears. Herman neither reconsiders the secondary literature in light of the comments of his interviewees; nor does he discuss the possibility that his respondents, as a sample, were poorly chosen, given his interpretation of the secondary literature. He is content to leave the contradiction unresolved.
A close reading of the book, itself hampered by sluggish, wordy writing, reveals other examples of this contradiction. A significant one occurs when the pages on Argentine anti-Semitism are juxtaposed with the following section from chapter 2:

The most salient exception to this phenomenon [of Latin Americans immigrating because of an inability to maintain a dual identity—e.g., Brazilian and Jew, Colombian and Jew] can be found among the Argentine Jews. Most of them I spoke to considered themselves to be Argentine prior to their immigration. The dual identity problem . . . [was] scarcely reason for their immigration. Perhaps the reason lies in the fact that Argentina, like the United States, is basically a country of immigrants. . . . The uniqueness of the Argentine-Israeli Jewish community was dramatized for me during the 1978 world soccer cup competition held in Argentina. Holland and Argentina were playing the finals. An overwhelming majority of Israelis supported Holland because of that country’s strong support for the Jewish community and Israel over the years. The night Argentina won the championship, several cars of happy young Argentine Jews drove through the main streets of Tel Aviv, honking their horns and celebrating Argentina’s victory. (pp. 46-47)

Does Professor Herman really think that such an attitude is unique to Argentina? Would not, say, Canadian immigrants have had the same reaction under similar circumstances? I think so. And if he wants an example of a still strong Brazilian tie, let him visit one of the kibbutzim of Brazilian or Brazilian-descended residents during Carnival.

In addition, and truly more important, is that common sense dictates that the kind of anti-Semitism Herman posits in the opening of the book would preclude such a strong tie. If, as he indicates, anti-Semitism were not merely a characteristic of the military but a virulent, intrinsic part of Argentine culture, one has to ask if those youngsters would really have been driving around cheering?

The problem here, I think, is twofold. First, Herman obviously lacks first-hand familiarity with the Latin American Jewish community. There are virtually no Latin American Jewish periodicals in his bibliography. Had he scanned them for the appropriate periods, had he conducted in-depth interviews with Jews of the Latin American Jewish community, he would have discovered that Latin American Jews do not see themselves as living in the intensely anti-Semitic place he describes, and that among other things, one of the most disliked individuals within the Argentine Jewish community is, in fact, Jacobo Timer-
man. His Jewish popularity is almost entirely in North America.

Now, we arrive at the second half of the problem, which can be summarized as follows: too often, problems related indirectly to being Jewish are unfairly labeled anti-Semitism, and too often, anti-Semitism is invoked in Latin America according to standards that are not Latin American.

As regards the labeling as anti-Semitic of incidents only indirectly related to being Jewish, it is no secret to anyone that an evil and treacherous military government in Argentina committed acts of the utmost perfidy. Thousands disappeared, among them many, many Jews. But one cannot call this a simple case of severe anti-Semitism. There was, of course, an anti-Semitic element. But those who suffered were made to, not specifically for being Jewish, but for characteristics perhaps related to being Jewish; they were leftists, intellectuals, those with a political orientation the state found, without, of course, any basis in fact, threatening. Their Jewishness may have aggravated their treatment, and in no case should any of the horror which the torture and deaths aroused be diminished. Still, speciousness mixed with emotionality cannot supplant historical reality.

As to anti-Semitism being invoked in Latin America by other than Latin American standards, let us first hear what Herman has to say:

Let me relate a conversation I had with an Argentine who has been living in the United States for more than 20 years and is currently a university professor. She and her family were the only Jews living in a small town outside Buenos Aires. On national days, the principal asked her to carry the Argentine flag during a school parade; this was to be an honor that recognized her high academic achievements. However, one of the mothers complained because she was a Jewess, and the principal chose someone else. She also had a very close friend who was Catholic. She and her friend had to be careful; if her friend’s father learned she was Jewish, he would have broken up the friendship. “After 20 years in the United States, I am still afraid to tell people I am Jewish. In Argentina, this is an everyday reality which is part of one’s existence.” (pp. 24-25)

Herman states after this passage that this is one person’s experience and should not be generalized from for the entire Argentine Jewish community. Still, his use of the anecdote indicates he believes it has no small grain of truth in it.

But, is the story true? Or rather, should it really be classified as describing anti-Semitism? Could one from a small midwestern town
not easily imagine similar experiences occurring there, especially over twenty years ago? When people do not live around Jews they do not know much about them. It is telling that the story occurred not in Buenos Aires, but in a small town outside the capital. But let us stop and state the issue plainly. Herman here labels as anti-Semitism incidents which were not anti-Semitic, but which were mostly understandable and logical consequences of Jewish life in Latin America.

The half million Jews in Latin America are a tiny fraction of the continent’s population. That the majority population will be ignorant and perhaps distrustful of Jews is a logical consequence, one severely intensified by the antipluralistic nature of Latin American society. If one is not of the majority, one will suffer certain hardships as a result. But automatically, in the case of Jews, to label this as anti-Semitism, is wrong. Ignorance provokes certain discrimination, but anti-Semitism provokes danger. The subjects of Herman’s own study admitted some discrimination in their native lands, but they denied any significant danger generated by anti-Semitism. And if one cannot believe such words coming from individuals who have chosen to leave, whose opinion can be accepted?

Latin America is by no means a Jewish utopia. Nor is it accurately depicted in Professor Herman’s alarming descriptions. Future assessments of Latin American Jewish life, both in Latin America and in Israel, will certainly include his data—but not, it is hoped, his logic.

—Clifford M. Kulwin

Rabbi Clifford M. Kulwin is Director for Latin American Affairs of the World Union for Progressive Judaism and a doctoral candidate in Jewish history at Columbia University.
When the "muses fled Hitler," and the academic and professional migration of (mostly Jewish) Austrians and Germans from Nazi Germany changed the look of American life, one might have thought that a new dose of liberalism had been shot into the sagging arm of the American body politic.
To a degree, Carol Ascher's very fine first volume questions this assumption through the eyes of Eva Hoffman, a young Jewish girl whose parents form a part of this intellectual migration. The story takes place in the summer of 1951, amidst Black efforts to integrate schools in Topeka, Kansas, and amidst a summer of heavy flooding which brings into the Hoffman home a bigoted rural family whose prejudices clash sharply with those of her "morally anxious" mother, and not so sharply with her psychoanalyst father, who seems to lose the humanistic values he once embraced as a European and as a Jew.

If we believe the media and our own religious institutions, Americans interreligious relations have never been better. Since the historic decisions rendered by Vatican II in 1965, a sense of interreligious calm seems to have descended upon the American community. This volume is intended to introduce the reader to the bad side of the good tidings. That despite George Washington's moving pronouncement that "the government of the United States... gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance" (and this to several Jewish congregations), Jews, Protestants, Catholics, and other American religious denominations have engaged in an historical interreligious hostility that hardly jibes with the handshaking civility that marks the emergence of the Judeo-Christian ethic as the underlying principle of our religious heritage.
Hence Jonathan D. Sarna and John Murray Cuddihy investigate their differing perceptions of Jewish and Christian triumphalism, and Samuel Heilman ponders the compatibility of Orthodox Judaism with the modern world. These are but three of several outstanding essays on phenomena of interreligious hostility and intrareligious tension that continue to be part of the religious fabric of our nation.

This volume is one of the most comprehensive reference works available on the history of American Jewish voluntary organizations, both at the local and national levels. There are over 125 historical sketches written by some of the outstanding names in the area of American Jewish scholarship, including Selma Berrol, Gary Dean Best, Stanley Chyet, Saul Friedman, Jeffrey Gurock, Uri D. Herscher, Abraham J. Karp, Deborah Lipstadt, Marc Lee Raphael, Ira Robinson, the late Arnold Shankman, and Herbert A. Strauss, among others. An important feature of *Jewish American Voluntary Organizations* is a special section entitled "Synthetic and Interpretative Essays" which deals with the Jewish communal response to
American Jewish Archives

aging; American Zionist organizations; the Jewish Federation movement; sectarian aspects of American Jewish religious organizations; Jewish feminism; refugee Landsmannschaften; and the Soviet Jewry movement in America.


In this most interesting volume, Alexandra Lee Levin maintains her position as one of the important contributors to the published life of Henrietta Szold, the founder of Hadassah. This book offers a remarkable glimpse into the life of Henrietta Szold from 1933 to 1944; the first ten years of the Youth Aliyah Movement to Palestine, which she founded. The family letters from Szold span a period of years that saw Youth Aliyah develop against the backdrop of Arab riots in Palestine, the rise of the Nazis, and British efforts to prevent mass Jewish immigration to Palestine, among many other issues. The letters also cover the last period of Henrietta Szold's life, when she was already well past the age of seventy, but still the “Miss Szold of legend—Hag'veret Szold, the great Lady Szold.”


Ruth Marcus Patt continues to be one of the most dedicated and published researchers on the Jewish experience in New Jersey. In this book she has traced the experience of Jews at Rutgers, New Jersey's state university, from the first Jewish graduate, Samuel Judah, in 1816 through the long list of distinguished Jewish graduates and faculty. Among the areas of her research, one can find important work on the “quota system” at Rutgers, Jewish fraternities, and Jews on the Rutgers faculty, as well as a number of other interesting areas.


More and more Americans have today moved away from the notion that the bases of our social and cultural systems are Anglo-American in shape or content. Indeed, what Horace Kallen described as “cultural pluralism” and what modern advocates of a multi-ethnic America view as the rise of the “unmeltable ethnics” in the period after 1960 would seem to be the prevailing national view.

This was not always the case. Indeed, for a good part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Anglo-American cultural conformity was a powerful force that affected the notion of what it took to become an American.

From the early years of the twentieth century to the period ending in 1945, the so-called Chicago school, social scientists at the University of Chicago, worked to change aspects of this view of American society and culture. Yet, however much scholars such as W. L. Thomas, Louis Wirth, Robert E. Park, and others might have been “enlightened men of goodwill devoid of ethnic or racial prejudice,” their backgrounds as representatives of an Anglo-Saxonized American educated class dominated their sociological thinking.

They rejected the cultural pluralism of a Horace Kallen as “impossible if not desirable,” and instead developed a concept of acculturation and assimilation predicated upon a notion of racial harmony fully dependent on the firm relationship of superior and subordinate ethnic groups.

As such, the Chicago school represented a step forward in the sociological “progress” of a more democratic America. But it also reflected the deep-seated view of the “them”-assimilat-
ing-to-“us" manner of thought which kept Blacks and other minority groups from achieving an equitable piece of the American cultural and economic pie for decades to come.


The life of Isidor Isaac Rabi, the preeminent American physicist of his generation and a Nobel Prize winner for his pioneering work on the magnetic properties of the atomic nucleus, is detailed in this highly readable biography.

Rabi’s life, from his birth in Galicia and upbringing on the Lower East Side of Manhattan and Brooklyn in an Orthodox Jewish home, to his important roles in the development of both the atomic bomb and radar in the 1940’s, bear the mark of an American “success story.”

But success did not change Rabi’s life and move it away from his sense of awe and wonderment at the creation of the world and the role played by religious belief. Indeed, Rabi, the man of science and the twentieth century, has stated with conviction that of decisive importance for his life and career, was “my early upbringing, so struck by God, the maker of the world, this has stayed with me.”


This wonderful catalogue served as the introduction to an exhibition which was presented on the occasion of Harvard University’s 350th anniversary in 1986. The exhibition and the catalogue are, as the Foreword tells us, an “only in America” story. It is “a story of a great university and of one minority with a tradition of, and reverence for, learning. It tells of a democratic society, not always free of prejudice, but with a sense of justice which finally prevailed, and of our oldest university gradually opening its gates to Jews and enabling them to reach their potential through education.” It is the story of the “Jewish idea, and the American idea,” and of their genius in a free and democratic setting.


In what is probably one of the major finding aids ever published on genealogical information relating to Jews from Czarist Russia, Sally Andur Sack and Suzan Fishl Wynne have produced a massive volume of nearly 100,000 names waiting to be discovered by ancestors.

The documents from which the names were extracted were part of a “horde” of materials that had come from former Czarist Russian consulates in North American seaboard cities. The documents were first stored in the Suitland, Maryland, facility of the National Archives. The drama of these documents includes a list of important players, including Robert S. Gordon, director of the Manuscript Division of the Public Archives of Canada, Rabbi Malcolm Stern, the dean of American Jewish genealogists, the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Washington and the Genealogical Society of Utah, and a list of over 100 individual contributors who made possible the completion of this finding aid.

As marvelous as it is, the reader must be aware of two obstacles related to the publication. The first is an astronomical price, $121! The second is the fact that names in the book are not listed alphabetically. Instead, the search must be done according to the “Doitch-Mokotoff Eastern European Soundex,” which relies more on the sound of the name than on its spelling. Mastering this soundex takes time, but it may bring unimagined results to those in search of family history.

This always informative yearbook on American and world Jewish life features important essays on “New Perspectives in American Jewish Sociology,” by Nathan Glazer; on “The Birburg Controversy” by Deborah E. Lipstadt; and on “The American Jewish Committee 80th Anniversary” by Henry L. Feingold and David M. Gordis.
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