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The First Hasidic Rabbis in North America
Ira Robinson

A visit to certain parts of New York City, New York State, and New Jersey will convince any observer of the richness of ultra-Orthodox or Hasidic life. Entire dynasties of European Hasidim managed to save themselves from the awful fate of European Jewry during the Holocaust, and their arrival in the United States was an important source of new strength for American Orthodox Judaism. But preceding them by nearly half a century were earlier Hasidic immigrants to North America who should have known better. After all, any Hasidic Jew in Eastern Europe knew that the North American continent was a “treife medina” (a religiously impure land). But come they did. Who they were and why they came is the essence of Ira Robinson’s important essay.

Philip and Morris Dzialynski: Jewish Contributions to the Rebuilding of the South
Canter Brown, Jr.

The study of the Southern Jewish experience is beginning to enjoy a long-awaited period of growth. More and more highly-competent researchers at the university level are beginning to investigate the interaction of the South and the Jew. Especially interesting is the research devoted to the role of Jewish businessmen in the reconstruction of the South after the disaster of the Civil War. An “anti-merchant refrain” was part and parcel of the backlash of poor white
Southern sharecroppers and dirtfarmers who suffered the social dislocations brought on by the aftermath of defeat and emancipation. Jewish businessmen were often targeted, a situation which did not sadden the former plantation owners desperately seeking to maintain their social and political control over the region and hoping to find a scapegoat for the wrath of the lower classes.

As Carter Brown, Jr. demonstrates in this biographical study, Philip and Morris Dzialynski, scions of one of Florida’s best-known pioneer Jewish families, participated in the rebuilding of the South and experienced the triumphs and failures of Southern life in the aftermath of the historic struggle between the states.

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Jewish Responses to the Integration of a Suburb: Cleveland Heights, Ohio, 1960–1980
Marc Lee Raphael

Relations between the American Jewish and African-American communities have been extremely difficult for the better part of two decades. Blacks feel abandoned by the community with whom they most identified and with whom they most participated in the great civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s. American Jews cannot understand the attitudes of the community with whom they shared a deep and meaningful “alliance” for so many years.

The promise of America for African-Americans meant the promise to live where they chose and to participate fully in the economic advantages of the wealthiest nation on earth. Surely, many Blacks reasoned in the 1960s and 1970s, the neighborhoods that will most welcome us and where we will have the least difficulties will be Jewish ones. That did not turn out to be an accurate assessment. Many Jewish neighborhoods across the nation joined in the “white flight” phenomenon of those years. But Cleveland Heights, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland with a large Jewish population, did not join the fleers. Instead, the community sought to address the issue by seeking to have more Jews move in and to balance the racial numbers in the area. Different strategies were developed, but the bottom line was that, as Marc Lee Raphael has found, Cleveland Heights became a
“kinder, gentler” community where Blacks and Jews could cooperate in the creation of a multicultural society.

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The Genesis of the Special Relationship Between the United States and Israel, 1948–1973

Bat-Ami Zucker

The United States has developed numerous “special relationships” with foreign nations in the decades after 1945. The special relationship with Great Britain, for instance, is based on a mother-daughter set of circumstances intensified by the common struggle against the Third Reich and the sharing of a “common” language.

The State of Israel was created only in 1948 in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Its national language is Hebrew and most Israelis are Jewish. Yet the relationship between Israel and the United States is perhaps the most “special” of all. Bat-Ami Zucker finds numerous reasons for such a relationship, one that has endured for nearly a half century despite the conflict and turmoil of the Middle East.

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(Courtesy Jewish Public Library, Montreal)
The First Hasidic Rabbis in North America

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The Issue

On March 3, 1893, the American Hebrew, traditionalist-oriented journal of the Americanized Jews of New York, reacted editorially to a story in the New York Herald of the previous Sunday which had, in the best muckraking tradition, exposed a seeming scandal on the Lower East Side. A rabbi on East Broadway, calling himself a Baal Shem (i.e., a master of the numinous power contained in the names of God), had been doing what such rabbis had done for centuries, writing amulets in order to cure the ailments of the faithful. For the Herald, this was a "nefarious faith-cure humbug." The American Hebrew supported this view, editorializing that it

caused a blush of shame to mantle the cheek of every honest Jew. . . . It is proper that every one who is at all representative of Judaism should emphatically reprobate this trickster and should especially denounce his attempt to cloak his swindling under the guise of religion.

When a reader pointed out that the rabbi was, in point of fact, most likely "as sincere as any [person] occupying Jewish and Christian pulpits; [whose] faith-healing remedies are based with calculating exactness upon formulas in the Kabbala and even in the Talmud," the editor of the American Hebrew deemed it necessary to comment:

It surpasses our comprehension how any fairly intelligent Jew can for a moment defend such practices. Rather the reverse, we should all exert the fullest influence possible to discountenance the transplanting of this system to this country.

The transplantation of Hasidic Judaism to North America, which so frightened the American Hebrew in 1893, is, one hundred years later, an accomplished fact. For most observers of the American Jew-
ish scene, however, Hasidic settlement in North America is basically a post–World War II phenomenon. Though they acknowledge that a sizable portion of the mass Eastern European Jewish emigration to North America from the 1880s to the 1920s came from areas where Hasidic Judaism was dominant, their assumption is that there was no organized Hasidic life in America during this period. The pronouncement of Jerome Mintz is typical:

Although hasidic Jews had been part of the earlier waves of immigration to America in the last century, for the most part they had come as individuals, leaving behind their Rebbe and the majority of the court. As most Rebbes had remained in Europe during this earlier period, the focal point of hasidic life had been missing.³

The considerable attention paid of late to contemporary North American Orthodox Judaism has caused a reevaluation of the history of American Orthodoxy. In particular, the role of the interwar Orthodox community in developing an institutional basis for the postwar development of American Orthodoxy has been noted.⁴ In all this, however, the history of the establishment of Hasidic Judaism in North America has been sadly neglected.

Why should this be so? In the first place, it is assumed that the European leaders of Hasidic Judaism did not themselves go to America and discouraged their followers from going to a country which had the reputation of not being conducive to maximal Judaic observance. Thus those Hasidic Jews who did somehow emigrate to North America did so completely bereft of spiritual leadership. On the surface, this assumption has much to recommend it. Within Eastern European Orthodox circles America was considered an “impure” country to be avoided if at all possible.⁵ Nineteenth-century Hasidic rebbes did discourage their followers from emigrating. Thus, R. David Shifrin, an early follower of the Lubavicher Rebbe to emigrate to the United States, recalled his parting with his rebbe, R. Shalom Dov Baer Schneersohn:

I did not come to ask whether to go. I had the ticket. I just did not want to be like a student who flees from the heder and does not tell the rebbe where he is going. Therefore I came to tell the rebbe that I am going to the United States.⁶
The same, however, could be said of the mitnagdic rabbinical establishment. It was, in fact, the Lithuanian rabbi David Willowsky (Ridbas) who stated that in America “even the stones are tref,” and similarly it was the Lithuanian rabbi Israel Meir ha-Kohen (Hafez Hayyim) who stated, in his book for emigrating Jews, Nidhe Yisra'el, that emigration to America was to be avoided or, at least, that America was to be made into a temporary place of settlement with the clear intention of returning to a land where Judaism could be properly observed. Despite these strictures, the Lithuanian rabbinical establishment, led by such personalities as Rabbi Isaac Elhanan Spector of Kovno, began sending rabbis to the United States and Canada as early as the 1880s. As for the Hasidim, it makes no sense that they should have emigrated in any great numbers without somebody attempting to fill the vacuum of Hasidic spiritual leadership.

The Earliest Hasidic Rabbis in North America

New York City, which apparently had a “Polish” synagogue as early as the 1840s, was home to Rabbi Joshua Segal, known as the Sherpser Rav, who came there in 1875. When Rabbi Jacob Joseph, a mitnaged from Vilna, was appointed chief rabbi of New York, Rabbi Segal was offered the position of av bet din under him. His refusal to take the subordinate position, and his subsequent appointment as “chief rabbi” of some twenty Hasidic congregations, organized as “Congregations of Israel, Men of Poland and Austria,” was one of the primary factors in the decline of the prestige of Jacob Joseph’s chief rabbinate, and amply demonstrates that Jewish immigrants from Hasidic areas were lacking in neither spiritual leadership nor organizational elan.

In 1893, the same year as the New York Herald exposé referred to at the beginning of the paper, Rabbi Hayyim Jacob Vidrovitz of Moscow came to the United States, where he was able to gather under his rabbinical control “a few small hasidic shtiblach” in New York and proclaimed himself “Chief Rabbi of America.”

Hasidic Jews were organizing in other communities as well. In 1894 there was a report in the Jewish Exponent of Philadelphia of a “wonder working rabbi” in Baltimore. The year 1896 saw the arrival in Boston of one of the first Lubavichers in the United States, Rabbi D. M. Rabinowitz, who became spiritual leader of the Agudat ha-
Sefardim of that city." Close attention to the Yiddish press of these years would doubtless elicit yet other examples of nineteenth-century Hasidic organizations and rabbis in America.

Of course it is one thing to say that there were rabbis serving Hasidic congregations and propagating Hasidic doctrines, and quite another to assert that there were Hasidic rebbes in America in this early period. In fact there were, if we know what we are looking for. It must be borne in mind that, in the context of late-nineteenth-century Hasidic Judaism, it was not merely descendants of old, established Hasidic dynasties who served as rebbes. To a certain extent, the field was open to men whose charismatic qualities gained them a certain following, especially if they could claim a distinguished ancestry, but sometimes even when they could not. It was inevitable that men of this kind, whom Solomon Poll, in his work on postwar Hasidism in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, calls "shtikl rebbes," would be the first to go to North America. Just as Jacob Joseph would probably not have agreed to become chief rabbi of New York had he not been in debt, so those Hasidic spiritual leaders who could make a go of it in Europe did not emigrate to the United States. In this first period, therefore, Hasidic leadership in America went to such shtikl rebbes as the anonymous Baal Shem of East Broadway and the "wonder working rabbi" of Baltimore.

The first evidence of concern on the part of the established Hasidic leadership for providing "legitimate" Hasidic leaders for America comes in 1903, when R. David Biderman, the Lelover Rebbe, instructed his nephew and disciple, R. Pinhas David Horowitz, to emigrate to America. According to the tale told by his descendants, R. Pinhas David was horrified at the very idea and refused to go, eventually setting out for America only during World War I, as an alternative to imprisonment.

Credit for being the first "legitimate" Hasidic rebbe to settle in the United States appears to go to the Ukrainian Twersky family. R. David Mordecai Twersky, a descendant of R. David Twersky, the Tolner Rebbe, settled in New York in 1912. Certainly the growth of American Jewry in the immediate prewar years as well as the increased institutionalization of Orthodoxy in the New World made
Hasidic Rabbis in North America

America an increasingly attractive destination for Hasidic rebbes— if not for settlement, then at least for a visit.

Thus, in January 1914, R. Israel Hagar, the Viznitser Rebbe, made a tour of North America. In Philadelphia, the Jewish Exponent reported that

Friday evening . . . five hundred Jews, young and old, stood on the benches [of the synagogue] to get a glimpse of the “Righteous Jew” as he is called. . . . On Saturday afternoon, after Mincha services, the rabbi was supposed to bless the Jews. Several thousands of people flocked to the synagogue. The police, fearing a riot, told the rabbi that the blessing would have to be postponed. . . . During the week the rabbi . . . will advise the distressed and give them his blessing.20

Other Hasidic rabbis known to have immigrated to North America at this time include R. Yudel Rosenberg, known as the Tarler Rebbe, who came from Lodz to Toronto in 1913 to be rabbi of its Polish synagogue,21 and Pinhas David Horowitz, who arrived in Boston in 1916 at the request of that city’s Hasidim and began calling himself the Bostoner Rebbe.22

The postwar period saw more immigration of Hasidic rabbis, including Moshe Zvi and Meshullam Zalman Twersky, brothers of the original Twersky in the United States. Moshe Zvi arrived in 1924 and lived in Philadelphia. Meshullan Zalman spent some time in Philadelphia before moving on to Boston in 1927.23 Other Hasidic rabbis of this period included R. Moshele Lipschitz, whose address on Sixth Street in Philadelphia gained him the name Der Zegster Tzaddik.24 A center of Hasidic life in New York was arising in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Kranzler, whose interests center almost exclusively on the post–World War II period, notes in passing that “a few rebbes” settled there in this period.25 Another scion of the Twersky family, R. Jacob, whose father had lived in Antwerp, settled in Milwaukee in 1927.26 R. Zvi Elimelekh Hertzberg (1894–1971), a native of Dinov, Galicia, and an “official” of the court of the Belzer Rebbe, came to America in 1923, first to New York, then to Youngstown, Ohio, and finally to Baltimore.27 The mid-1920s also saw the beginnings of an organized Lubavicher presence in North America.28 An extensive tour by the Lubavicher Rebbe, R. Joseph Isaac Schneersohn, took place in 1929; and in the 1930s, the Lubavicher
Rebbe apparently considered the possibility of moving his court to America.9 This era also saw the emigration of several Hasidic rabbis from Eastern Europe to England.10

These facts, gleaned in a serendipitous way, could doubtless be further amplified, so that other North American Jewish communities with a Hasidic presence could be added to the list. Research on the first Hasidic rabbis in the United States is still in its infancy. However, enough has been demonstrated to amply show that pre–World War II North America was hardly a barren desert for adherents of Hasidic Judaism.

A Case Study of a North American Hasidic Rabbi

All of the foregoing, of course, merely scratches the surface. In order to flesh out the picture, we need to gain a closer perspective on the lives and problems of these first Hasidic rabbis. For this purpose, I will present in some detail the North American experience of one of the people I mentioned earlier, whose biography I am currently writing, R. Yudel Rosenberg (1859–1935).31

Rosenberg was born in the small town of Skaryszew in Russian Poland, claiming distinguished ancestors on both sides of his family. Apparently he excelled in his Torah studies, becoming known as the Skaryszever Ilui. Also, like many traditionalist youths of his generation, he was exposed to the literature of Jewish modernism—the Haskalah. Married at seventeen, Yudel Rosenberg moved to the town of Tarlow, where, after a period of independent study, he went into business.32

His failure as a businessman and the necessity of providing for a growing family forced Rosenberg, ostensibly against his will, to become rabbi of Tarlow in 1885. Dissatisfied with life as a small-town rabbi, he moved to Lublin, where he hoped to find a position as a rabbinical judge. In 1891, in consonance with this goal, he took and passed a Russian government examination designed to test his proficiency in the Russian language and laws concerning the rabbinate, as was required in order to officiate as a rabbi in Poland.33

Having backed the losing candidate in the election for the Lublin rabbinate in 1892, Rosenberg moved to Warsaw. In the metropolis of
Poland, he eked out an existence on the fringes of the official rabbinate while publishing numerous books from 1902 on. These included a supercommentary on the talmudic tractate *Nedarim*, a short-lived rabbinical periodical, and the beginnings of an ambitious project to reedit large portions of the Zohar and translate them from Aramaic to Hebrew. He also published a number of literary forgeries, supposedly derived from a nonexistent "Royal Library of Metz," which included, most prominently, *Nifla‘ot Maharal mi-Prag ‘im Ha-Golem* (1909), which gave the world what was to become the standard version of the story of the Golem of Prague, and which Yosef Dan has called the most important twentieth-century contribution of Hebrew literature to world literature.

These publications seem to have so enhanced Rosenberg’s reputation that in late 1909 or 1910 he moved from Warsaw, where, apparently, he had at long last realized his ambition of official status as a *dayyan*, to the city of Lodz, where he attempted to set himself up as a Hasidic rebbe. He called himself the Tarler Rebbe after the town where he had first functioned as a rabbi.

The most reasonable explanation for Rosenberg’s move is that he thought he could do better as a rebbe in Lodz, a city which tended to look to the outside for its spiritual leadership, than as a *dayyan* in Warsaw. Though contemporary Hasidism was dominated by major institutionalized dynasties such as Ger, Lubavich, Alexander, and Belz, there was still room at the bottom of the ladder for a newcomer to set up a synagogue or study house and attempt to attract followers while, at least at the outset, supplementing his income from other sources.

Rosenberg settled in Balut, a working-class district of Lodz, and did attract some followers, supplementing his income as rebbe by practicing homeopathic medicine. In a letter written toward the end of his life, he recalled this aspect of his practice as rebbe.

> When I lived . . . in the city of Lodz as a rebbe of Hasidim I needed to dispense cures and remedies. I wrote the book *Refael ha-Mal‘akh* ["The Angel Raphael"] . . . for I did not want to take fees [pidyonim] for nothing. Thus I was obliged to seek cures and remedies which were good and effective. I especially employed homeopathic remedies which were effective. The medical books I had were from great professors, all in the Russian language.
As is clear from this passage, Rosenberg was a mixture of the old and the new. *Refael ha-Mal'akh*, which he published in 1911, contained three methods of treating illness: home remedies and medicines that could be obtained from pharmacies without a doctor's prescription, amulets, and incantations. He could, on the one hand, thunder against a rival Hasidic practitioner's prescription for a barren woman that she consume the foreskin of a circumcised child:

> Enough of such stupidity and foolishness. It merely makes a jest and mockery that such things can be found in the literature of Israel. These minor rebbes [rebbelekh] who give out such a remedy are of inferior intellect and without sense. . . . They think that everything printed in such books is something which has substance.39

On the other hand, he could state, with regard to an amulet he prescribed for a difficult childbirth:

> This amulet was revealed to me from Heaven. I earnestly give a very great warning that no man utilize this amulet unless he know and understand the secret of the combination of these three [divine] names.*

Rosenberg also wrote other sorts of books in Lodz in order to supplement his income. These works ranged from the halakhot of *prosbul* (a talmudic legal formula pertaining to loans) and *sha'atnez* (forbidden mixtures of wool and linen) to collections of midrashim and Hasidic stories.41 All of his activities combined, however, were not enough to make ends meet. In the first place, Lodz was suffering an economic recession, which impacted particularly hard on the poor Jews who were Rosenberg's Hasidim. Secondly, there was a great deal of competition at the bottom end of the rebbe market, a competition which was often accompanied by mutual accusations. Thus, in one of Rosenberg's letters to his eldest son, Mayer Joshua, he describes an accusation against him alleging that he was "not a rebbe, but only a maskil [follower of the Haskalah] and unbeliever [apikoros] and a bit of a doctor."@ This could not have helped.

In the same letter, Rosenberg summed up his financial situation. His daughter, Hessel, married to a man who had emigrated to Toronto, had received ship's passage from him in order to join him in Canada. However, Rosenberg reminded his son:
Ultimately, Rosenberg realized that he could not make a go of being a rebbe in Lodz. Thus, in 1913, when he received an invitation from the Polish synagogue of Toronto, issued at the behest of his son-in-law there, to come and serve as its rabbi, he accepted.43

Yudel Rosenberg arrived in Canada in July 1913. His congregation in Toronto, Beth Jacob, which had been founded in 1905, had at the time only sixty-five members. However, according to one account, hundreds of people worshipped there and participated in such Hasidic ceremonies as the “third meal” of the Sabbath, conducted on Saturday afternoons, at which Rosenberg presided.44

In Toronto, Rosenberg came to be known as the Poilisher Rebbe.45 He continued to look the part of the Hasidic rebbe, with his beard and pe’ot (side-curls), shtreiml (fur hat), and bekeshe (long coat), despite the fact that his appearance in this guise meant that he was subject to harassment when he appeared on the street, and hence he did so infrequently. Some things, however, changed when Rosenberg crossed the Atlantic. Though there is evidence that he continued to write amulets for those who desired them, he ceased the practice of homeopathic medicine—perhaps because the practice of medicine was more stringently regulated in North America.46

Moving to Canada, unfortunately, did not solve Rosenberg’s financial problems. Toronto, no less than Lodz, was suffering from an economic recession, and Rosenberg’s constituents, the Polish-Jewish community, having arrived fairly recently, were relatively less in a position to support a rabbi than other sectors of Toronto’s immigrant Jewish community. This situation, incidentally, was not unique. Kranzler, in his account of Williamsburg, remarks that the Hasidic community in this era was economically less well off than the mitnagdic Orthodox community. According to the accounts we have of Rosenberg’s rabbinate in Toronto, he suffered from economic want to the point, at times, of actually having no bread to put on the table.47

In order to make ends meet, Rosenberg attempted a number of things. He was a mohel (ritual circumciser), adjudicated disputes brought to him, and went out of town to serve on rabbinical courts
when called upon. He wrote books on halakhic subjects dealing with mikveh and synagogue procedure—topics of immediate relevance to Orthodox Jews in North America. None of these things yielded a sufficient income.  

For an immigrant Orthodox rabbi in North America, Hasidic or not, the only way to make a decent living was through the supervision of the kosher meat industry. Rosenberg, naturally, turned to this field as well. Kashrut, in Toronto, was controlled by other, more established rabbis, with whom Rosenberg had to compete for his livelihood. For a brief time in 1915 he affiliated himself with the rabbis of the Toronto Va’ad ha-Kashruth, but he soon broke away and attempted to organize his own system of kashrut supervision, employing ritual slaughterers who had refused to affiliate with the Va’ad and whose meat had been banned by the other rabbis, and attacking the very legitimacy of the Va’ad. Perhaps because his community had little economic power, Rosenberg’s efforts in kashrut came to naught.

Another of Rosenberg’s initiatives in Toronto was more successful. This was the organization of an institution for the Jewish education of children, at first simply called the Polish Talmud Torah and then formally named Etz Hayyim. It was Rosenberg who was largely responsible for the spiritual direction of the school, which soon boasted four teachers and some 120 students. He made sure that the Jewish education offered at Etz Hayyim was free of “secular” tendencies and as close as possible to the elementary education offered in Poland.

Ultimately, Rosenberg was unable to make a go of it economically in Toronto, and so, in 1919, he shifted his base of operations to Montreal, where he had been invited by a faction of butchers and slaughterers to become their chief rabbi and, not incidentally, to serve as a counterweight to the authority of R. Hirsch Cohen, a Lithuanian rabbi who had been in Montreal since the 1890s and was generally acknowledged by the city’s established Jewish community as its chief rabbi.

In Montreal, Yudel Rosenberg and Hirsch Cohen fought a bitter kosher-meat war in the early 1920s which ended in a stalemate and a compromise whereby Cohen became president of the rabbinical council of Montreal’s Va’ad ha-Ir and Rosenberg vice-president.  

It
should be noted that in these kosher-meat disputes, Rosenberg was attacked, among other things, for his adherence to Hasidism. Thus one satirical anti-Rosenberg handbill states: “The womanish Zaddik, Rosenberg, came and declared [an allegedly tref animal] kosher with his pe’ot. . . . The pe’ot with his fifty-dollar check make everything kosher.”

In Montreal Rosenberg continued his literary activities with the publication of books and pamphlets containing sermons and halakhic decisions. His main project during this period, however, was the completion of his new edition and translation into Hebrew of the Zohar. Though he had published the first volume, covering the Book of Genesis, as far back as 1905, it was only now that Rosenberg resumed and completed the project in eight volumes published in the years 1924–1931. In 1927 he also published a companion volume, Sefer Niflous ha-Zohar, giving a bilingual Hebrew-Yiddish edition of stories regarding Rabbi Simeon Bar Yohai, the hero of the Zohar.

What Rosenberg hoped to accomplish with his work on the Zohar was to make it a genuinely popular book, one which might be studied by schoolchildren and synagogue study groups in the same manner as the Mishnah and the Eyn Ya’akov. His ultimate aim in all this was nothing less than to help bring about the coming of the Messiah. As he stated:

I know that my book . . . is not needed by the great men who are comparable to divine angels. . . . However, they, too, will rejoice . . . when they see the awakening of ordinary men to study and understand the statements of the holy Zohar. For that is a sign that salvation will soon be revealed. . . . The good of the community of Israel will arise through the study of the Zohar. We cannot say that [salvation] depends upon [the study of the Zohar] by the great ones of the generation alone. . . . For there will yet come a new revelation [of the Zohar] to the masses of Israel . . . who will taste of the Tree of Life.

The general impression given by a perusal of Rosenberg’s writings is that his life as a Hasidic rabbi in Canada was one of ceaseless struggle between the pious remnants of Israel and the helpers of Satan. . . . At that time Jacob, the spirit of ancient Israel [Yisrael sabba] will remain almost alone with no help or support. For the people will go in darkness and will not wish to go in the spirit of ancient Israel. Only a tiny minority will be the remnant which God calls. Then Jacob will remain limping on his hip because of the coldness of
Before we are able to say that the experience of Yudel Rosenberg was typical of the fate of those Hasidic rabbis and rebbes who came to North America prior to World War II, much more research will have to be done. However, even in the current state of research, it is possible to make a few generalizations.

1. A prewar North American Hasidic community did exist and did enjoy a spiritual leadership.

2. Established Hasidic leaders, like the contemporary mitnagdic leaders, tended not to come to America unless under pressure from economic or political need. This meant that Hasidic spiritual leaders who settled in North America in this period tended to be men of the second rank, unable to establish themselves satisfactorily in Europe.

3. Hasidic rabbis, like the community they served, tended to emigrate later than their mitnagdic counterparts, and hence found themselves at a decided disadvantage in establishing their own control of kashrut supervision, with all its social and economic implications, in the face of an already established system headed by mitnagdic rabbis. This fact helps to explain the bitter battles over kosher-meat supervision which took place in city after city in North America in this period.

4. Though the prewar Hasidic spiritual leadership in North America was not visibly more successful in propagating its vision of Judaism than its mitnagdic counterpart, neither was it less successful. When, during World War II and its aftermath, the surviving remnants of Hasidic life in Europe took refuge in the New World, they did not find a tabula rasa. Hasidism and Hasidic leaders already existed in North America. The prewar Hasidic pioneers had provided a base upon which the new Hasidic immigrants proceeded to build their communities.
Notes

2. Ibid., March 17, 1893, p. 653.
6. Shalom Duber Levin, Toldois Chabad B’Artziot Ha’Bris (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1988), p. 5. See also the case reported on p. 7, where the rebbe was not asked since he would “almost certainly” have advised against going.
8. Israel Meir ha-Kohen, Nidhei Yisrael (Warsaw, 1894), pp. 288–293.
12. Ibid., p. 172, n. 128.
21. On Yudel Rosenberg, see n. 31 below.
23. Personal communication from Dr. Isadore Twersky. Cf. Re’em, “Semukhim le-’Ad ule-’Olam.”


29. Ibid., p. 88.


33. Ibid., chap. 3. The Russian government certificate issued to Rosenberg upon passing the examination is in the possession of Mr. Lionel Albert of Montreal. A photocopy is in the author’s possession.

34. Ibid., chap. 4.


37. Cf. n. 15 above. Professor Robert M. Shapiro, of the Baltimore Hebrew University, in his research on the Jews of Lodz in the interwar period, informs me in a personal communication that he has discovered the traces of a number of shtikl rebbes in Lodz.

38. Yudel Rosenberg to Moshe Blistreich, Hanukkah 5695 (Rosenberg Papers, Jewish Public Library, Montreal). A photocopy is in the possession of the author.


40. Ibid., p. 64.


42. Yudel Rosenberg to Mayer Joshua Rosenberg, dated Lodz, Wednesday of Parshat va-Yiggash [no year cited]. The original is in the possession of Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Meir of Jerusalem. A photocopy is in the possession of the author.


44. Ibid.


46. Cf. the letter to Moshe Blistreich cited in n. 38 above.


49. Ibid., p. 281.


51. Ira Robinson, “The Kosher Meat War and the Foundation of the Montreal Jewish Community Council, 1922–1925” [Hebrew], *Proceedings of the Tenth World Congress of Jewish Studies,* Divi-

52. Ibid., p. 374.

53. Handbill, undated, in Jewish Community Council file, Canadian Jewish Congress Archives, Montreal.


Philip Dzialynski
(1833–1896)
(Courtesy Perry Coleman, Jacksonville, Florida)

Morris Dzialynski
(1841–1907)
(Courtesy Perry Coleman, Jacksonville, Florida)
"What can we not say of Morris Dzialynski?" asked Rabbi Pizer Jacobs of Congregation Ahavath Chesed in Jacksonville, Florida, as he began his eulogy. As the rabbi spoke, on May 8, 1907, a "steady down pour of rain" fell, and, according to report, "those who could not find room in the Temple took refuge in the piazzas of the neighboring houses." Inside the synagogue "the whole people of the city were represented." Proclaimed the town's principal newspaper, "Never before has there been such general expression of sorrow and regret over the death of any person."

As had proved to be the case with other members of his family—particularly his elder brother, Philip—Morris Dzialynski, over a lifetime of service, had earned the respect of his fellow citizens while endeavoring against difficult odds to build a life of security and comfort for his loved ones. "He came a boy to this country," recalled Rabbi Jacobs of Jacksonville's late mayor and municipal judge, "and though starting from a very humble beginning, he ascended, step by step, from the healthy work of nature's fields to the lofty position of city magistrate." He continued: "Like many noble men his character was a gradual progression through bitter experience. He showed he had the making of a noble character."

The story of Morris and Philip Dzialynski, and of their family, is a fascinating study of lives founded in an honorable pursuit of the American Dream. It reflects, as well, the history of hundreds, if not thousands, of Jewish immigrants to the United States in the aftermath of the European revolutions of 1848. Perhaps more importantly, the Dzialynskis are significant for typifying those individuals of initiative and character who helped revive the economic, cultural, political, and religious life of the South in the aftermath of the Civil War. The study of the role of Jewish men and women during the Reconstruction is
still in its infancy. One aspect of this question which deserves special
attention is the part played by Jewish businessmen in the develop-
ment of Southern communities.4 The importance of the point lies not
only in an interest in Jewish history, but also in a broader interest in
understanding how the South was able, economically and socially, to
struggle to its feet as well as it did, even when the reality of its recov-
ery was such as to place it at a distinct disadvantage to the rest of the
country.

A principal element in the dynamics of the post–Civil War Southern
economy was the creation and growth of numerous small towns and
villages. The large-scale plantation economy was in ruins, as was the
factorage system by which the plantations had been supplied with
goods and supplies. Instead, wholesale merchants operating out of
larger commercial centers came to service general stores located, eventu-
ally, “at almost every crossroad in the South.”5 Many individuals at
both ends of this new system of mercantile organization, including
Philip and Morris Dzialynski, were Jews. Thus, an understanding of
the lives and experiences of the Dzialynski brothers may provide a
broader insight into this important facet of Southern history.

The Brothers Settle in Florida

Philip and Morris Dzialynski were born in Prussian Poland, the sons
of Abraham Samuel and Rachin Dzialynski. Philip’s birth was on
June 15, 1833, at Posen. Morris’s followed on July 14, 1841.6 The fami-
ly included three other brothers, John, Jacob, and Henry, and four sis-
ters, Dora, Hannah, Helena, and Augusta.7 Little is known of their
eyearly years in Prussia, save for a single sentence of reminiscence by
Philip’s eldest son. “Philip D.,” George I. P. Dzialynski wrote, “fought
in the Polish Rev. in ’48 with Jacobi and Schultz.”8 After the revolt,
perhaps because he had participated on the losing side, fifteen-year-
old Philip emigrated from Prussia and settled in New York. In 1853
he sent for the remainder of the family.9

George Dzialynski recalled that the family’s crossing of the
Atlantic took fifty-seven days.” Rachin died within three months of
landing in New York, perhaps from the rigors of the crossing. Almost
immediately thereafter Abraham moved the family to Jacksonville,
Florida. It may be that Philip had visited the area previously "as a peddler.""  

Jacksonville in 1853 was not far removed from being a frontier town. Its population was around 1,500, a figure which was diminished somewhat that year by an outbreak of smallpox. Still, the community was one of the state’s larger towns, and optimism about its future was in the air. The recent erection of several steam-powered sawmills had spurred the growth of the lumber industry, and efforts were in hand to develop the town’s potential as a port through railroad construction.  

In Jacksonville the younger Dzialynski children, including Morris, attended the town’s common schools, while Philip and his father supported the family, likely by peddling. On August 11, 1856, Philip married fellow Prussian emigre Ida Ehrlick at nearby Suwannee Shoals, a trading center on the Suwannee River, and in their Jacksonville home on June 8 of the following year a son, George, was born. A daughter, Regina or "Jennie," followed within two years. Sisters Hannah, Helena, and Dora also married during the family’s early years in Jacksonville, if not earlier. Tragedy struck, however, in the fall of 1857, when an outbreak of yellow fever took the lives of father Abraham and brothers Jacob and Henry. Theirs were among the first burials in Jacksonville’s Old Jewish Cemetery, believed to be the first Jewish cemetery in Florida.

Philip in Madison

In 1860 Jacksonville’s long-awaited rail connection with the interior of the state became a reality. This opened up the opportunity for Philip Dzialynski, whose fortunes had begun to rebound, to establish himself as a businessman. He moved the family to Madison, which was part of Middle Florida’s plantation belt. By the time the first train arrived there on July 4, 1860, Philip had opened a general merchandise store.

Dzialynski had little time to establish himself in Madison, for within a few months the presidential election of 1860 had taken place, and in its aftermath secessionist sentiments raged in the South. In few places were they more intensely felt than in plantation-dominated
Madison County. When news of Florida’s secession reached the town in January 1861, the reaction was one of joy. One local woman explained: "This place was settled by natives of South Carolina, and no doubt we imbibed our fire eating propensities from that State. We believed in the doctrines of John C. Calhoun." The people of Madison quickly set about organizing Confederate volunteer companies. One was Company G of the Third Florida Infantry, known as the Madison Gray Eagles. Among the first to enlist in its ranks was twenty-year-old Morris Dzialynski. By the summer of 1862 the unit had been ordered north to join the Army of Tennessee.

Philip remained in Madison to support the family and tend to his mercantile business. Wartime life was not without its opportunities. As one local historian put it, "Madison County’s job was to provide supplies for the fighting men, and to be a refugee center for those who fled areas taken over by the Union Army, such as Fernandina, Jacksonville and St. Augustine." The town became a Confederate commissary center, and Dzialynski did not fail to capitalize on the commercial possibilities thus afforded.

Madison escaped direct armed conflict during the war. It served, however, as a staging point for Confederate efforts to eliminate bands of deserters and Union sympathizers in nearby Taylor and Levy counties. The greatest threat to the town came from the ill-fated Union initiative in February 1864 which culminated in the Battle of Olustee. Even then the Union forces were repelled at a point over 70 miles to the east.

Though Madison escaped military threat, Philip found himself assailed by personal tragedy. On January 16 his wife, Ida, died while giving birth to a son, Rudolph. Shortly thereafter he relocated the family, including his own three children and siblings John and Augusta, to Savannah. From all indications, the five or so years he spent there were at once the most painful and the most fulfilling of his life.

Before examining the Dzialynski family’s life in Savannah, one additional point should be considered about their wartime experiences in Madison. No specific evidence is available as to why Philip moved the family. The reason may have been a better business oppor-
tunity or a desire to provide for his children through an early remarriage. It may, however, have been the result of anti-Semitism.

As Bertram Wallace Korn has described, the Civil War unleashed intense prejudice in certain areas of the South, some Southerners finding in Jews the perfect scapegoats for Southern reverses on the battlefield. One such incident occurred at Thomasville, Georgia, which lies some 40 miles northwest of Madison. There, on August 30, 1862, local citizens denounced the “unpatriotic conduct” of “German Jews” and banished them from the town. It also was reported that “denunciations of Jewish merchants were frequent in the area, and that the habit had spread from town to town throughout the state.” Unfortunately, since most Florida newspapers of the era have not survived, there is no solid evidence that the anti-Semitic spirit spread to Madison. It may be significant, though, that the principal objections raised against the Thomasville action were voiced at a public meeting held in Savannah.

**Philip in Savannah**

Philip entered into a business partnership in Savannah with a young Prussian emigre, Julius Slager. Their dry goods store was located at 70 St. Julian Street, and when the partnership was dissolved in February 1866, Philip continued to operate from “the old stand.” In the early postwar era Savannah enjoyed a commercial revival, and Philip was able to benefit from it. Within two years he was operating as a “commission merchant” for all of southern Georgia and northern Florida and had established branch offices in Madison and in Quitman, Georgia.

In Savannah Philip also established a new family. On May 28, 1865, he married Prussian-born Mary Cohen. Their first child, a daughter they named Esther, was born in April 1866. Sadly, the infant passed away in December of the following year, compounding the March 1865 loss of Philip’s infant son, Rudolph.

The anguish experienced by Philip over the children’s deaths must have blunted the happiness he felt at the same time for other events in his life. George Dzialynski remembered his father as a “Hebrew scholar,” and during the Savannah years Philip, for the only time in
his adult life, was able fully to pursue his interest in and love for Jewish culture and religion.38 He assumed, for example, a leadership role in the affairs of Savannah’s B’nai Berith Jacob Congregation.37 In May 1866 he participated in the solicitation of bids for the design and construction of the congregation’s synagogue.38 When it was consecrated he served as a “special marshal” for the ceremonies.39 He also acted as the congregation’s representative in the organization of the Savannah Hebrew Collegiate Institute, and when it was opened in November 1867 he served on its first permanent council.40 This love for his Jewish heritage and for education was to reassert itself later in Philip’s life—and under far less refined circumstances.

Morris at War and in Jacksonville

Philip’s pride in his Jewishness was shared by his brother Morris, although some time passed before Morris could act upon it. In his first battle as a Confederate soldier, at Perryville, Kentucky, Morris was wounded severely. After a period of convalescence he fought at Murphreesboro, “but his wound unfitted him to remain in the field, and he was detailed in the blockade running service between Indian River [Florida] and Nassau.”41 Florida’s Confederate cavalry hero, J. J. Dickison, claimed that Morris made “five [blockade running] trips successfully before the end of the war.”42 However, a separate account written about the same time noted, “The particular attempts at blockade running in which he was engaged, were . . . not successful, but through no fault of the brave men who made the attempt.”43

As brother Philip established himself at Savannah, Morris returned to a war-devastated Jacksonville. Shortly he married Rosa Slager, the eighteen-year-old German-born daughter of a well-to-do Jacksonville merchant, Charles Slager.44 Within a year their only child, Rosalie, was born, and the family settled into an increasingly prosperous life in what quickly became Florida’s most dynamic and important city.45

Great similarities are evident in the lives of Philip and Morris Dzialynski in the years following their new beginnings in the aftermath of the Civil War. Both were active in the commercial, social, and political lives of their communities. Both applied habits of industry and tenac-
ity, combined with a sense of humor and humility. And both remained close to their Jewish heritage.

Despite these many similarities, there were also significant differences. First and foremost, Morris was content to accept his good fortune in the fast-growing city of Jacksonville, while Philip was forced by circumstances to leave Savannah and pursue his on the Florida frontier. Morris in ways proved the lucky one. So far as is known, his life moved in a gentle progression, slowly but uniformly upward—at least until the incapacitation and later death of his wife in 1905. Philip’s, on the other hand, was a roller-coaster ride that combined elements of boom and bust, violence, satisfaction, and despair. It was a life that typified the frontier.

The South Florida Frontier

The specific reasons for Philip’s departure from Savannah can only be guessed at. Crop failures in 1866 and 1867 undermined Savannah’s prosperity in the years that followed. The development of rail transportation and the accompanying growth of cotton farming in upland regions brought, in Eric Foner’s words, “a wholesale shift in regional economic power.” Port cities like Savannah steadily lost economic ground to inland hubs like Atlanta. In the process many Savannah “commission,” or wholesale, merchants were forced into bankruptcy. Philip Dzialynski likely was one of them.

Whatever the reason, in the early months of 1870 Philip’s family moved to Palatka, Florida. They lived there with Philip’s brother-in-law, Jacob R. Cohen, who also had just relocated from Savannah. Both men were merchants, and through his brother-in-law Philip came by his next opportunity. Cohen had entered into a partnership with a cattleman from south Florida, Julius Rockner, to open a series of general stores along the south Florida frontier. In the post–Civil War era this region ran roughly down the Peace River; in modern terms, from just south of today’s Lakeland to Punta Gorda. There were no towns, as such, in the area. The 1850s military post at Fort Meade was the closest thing the vicinity offered to a village. The seat of Polk County was 10 miles to the north at Bartow, and cattlemen had begun settling and trading 60 miles south of there at what was then called
Fort Ogden. These were the locations at which Cohen and Rockner planned to operate their stores.55

The opportunity afforded by entering into the mercantile business on the Peace River frontier was greater than might at first meet the eye. Although the area was an isolated, underpopulated expanse of cattle range, plans were in motion to open it up for settlement and exploitation. In June 1869 Republican Governor Harrison Reed had publicly committed his administration in support of a railroad to Charlotte Harbor, Peace River’s outlet to the Gulf of Mexico.56 At its next regular session, in February 1870, the Florida legislature also sanctioned the creation of a corporation to clear the river for light-draft steamboat navigation from Charlotte Harbor to as far north as Fort Meade.57 Finally, the south Florida cattle industry had begun to prosper when the demand for cattle in Spanish Cuba exploded as the effects of an insurrection began to be felt in the island’s cattle-producing regions.58 Optimism definitely was rife in the area.

The optimism of 1870 did not draw Philip to the frontier, however, but rather the disappointment of 1871. In the spring of that year the partnership of Jacob Cohen and Julius Rockner dissolved. As a result, Rockner took complete control of the Fort Meade and Fort Ogden stores, while Cohen retained the one at Bartow. To run the establishment he turned to his brother-in-law, Philip.59

Philip in Bartow

Dzialynski arrived in Bartow almost immediately after the breakup of the partnership. The community owed its existence, in great part, to the patronage of a cattleman, Jacob Summerlin, who three years earlier had moved away.60 While it boasted a few amenities, the village barely deserved the name. It was the county seat, however, and its fortunes waxed and waned in tandem with the county’s economy. A barometer of its situation in 1870 can be judged from the report of a local man four years later. “The business of the county,” he wrote, “is meager, so much so that the county cannot afford business for two lawyers (not a single case, either civil or criminal, on the docket); one has to cow-drive and the other is an accountant in a mercantile house to make a genteel livelihood.”61
Despite the modest nature of his new home, Philip quickly plunged into the town's affairs. Within only a few months after his arrival, for example, he had helped to organize a Bartow chapter of Royal Arch Masonry. His acceptance by the townspeople was recognized by his selection as an officer of the chapter. His growing popularity in the community and his interest in civic matters was attested to the following year when Republican Governor Reed appointed Dzialynski, a Democrat, as a Polk County commissioner.

Dzialynski's social and civic life might have been on the rise, but his business prospects had taken a tumble by the time of his appointment to the county commission. Late in 1871 a disgruntled investor in prewar Florida railroad bonds, Francis Vose, obtained a federal court injunction against the state which essentially forbade it from granting away public lands for internal improvements until its obligations to him were satisfied. Since the state was in no financial condition to extinguish the debt to Vose, projects like the railroad to Charlotte Harbor and the clearing of Peace River, both of which depended for their financing upon land grants, abruptly came to a halt.

The rapid expansion of his business forestalled, Philip Dzialynski urgently attempted to collect old accounts in order to satisfy his own obligations. By the spring of 1874 he was forced to retrench by relocating to the less-isolated, though tiny, town of Orlando, situated near the navigable St. Johns River. His brother-in-law, Jacob Cohen, had invested in the area, and Mary Cohen Dzialynski purchased a store there for Philip to operate.

From all accounts Philip's thoughts never left the possibilities of the Peace River frontier. Although the Vose injunction had halted development projects, it had not damaged the flourishing cattle trade with Cuba. By 1876 Spanish gold doubloons received from cattle sales comprised the circulating currency in the area and, at least according to report, were so plentiful that "in many of our country log houses may be found an iron 'gopher'—a Hall Warmer, or Butler—in which the wily farmer or rancher secretes the frolicsome doubloon."
The capital of Florida's cattle kingdom in the mid-1870s was Fort Meade. In 1874 almost $400,000 worth of cattle was bought and sold there, while local merchants did a very considerable business of about $100,000 per year. At the time the village was described as a "flourishing, busy, and bustling little town, on a beautiful bluff on the left bank of Peace creek." "The health and water is fine," the report continued, "and society refined and orderly." How refined society could have been on that violent frontier is open to question; but to the extent that there was any society in the area, it was to be found at Fort Meade. In 1877 a local man recorded: "Some five or six stores are established here, and it is a place of considerable business. Most of the trading is with the stock men and the stock raisers, who handle more money, as a general thing, than any other class in South Florida." The lure of Fort Meade's prosperity proved irresistible to Philip. In the spring of 1876 he and Mary bought out Julius Rockner's general store and established a home they were to maintain, with one interlude, for the next thirteen years. Although slowly at first, they began to rebuild their finances. While plagued by earlier debts, Philip achieved a breakthrough late in the decade when he entered into a partnership with the area's physician and druggist, Dr. Charles L. Mitchell. Dzialynski, Mitchell, & Co. became one of the leading commercial establishments on Fort Meade's Wire Street and grew with the affluence of the cattle trade.

In the immediate postwar years Savannah had offered Philip an opportunity to satisfy his cultural and religious needs. In the late 1870s and through the 1880s Fort Meade offered him a forum for utilizing his talents as an entrepreneur, businessman, and civic leader. The list of projects in which Dzialynski was involved from 1876 to 1889 is lengthy, and it may fairly be said that he was an influence behind most early efforts of significance to open up southwest Florida to immigration and development. By way of example he was an organizer of the Tampa, Peace Creek and St. Johns Railroad (eventually the South Florida Railroad), the planned but never-built Fort Meade, Keystone and Walk-in-the-Water Railroad, the Tampa and Fort Meade Hack Line, and the Tampa and Fort Meade Telegraph Company.
Philip was one of the first individuals to subdivide and sell lots at Fort Meade, and he became one of south Florida's first real estate agents. With Mary he opened a hotel, the Dzialynski House, and augmented it with a livery stable. He invested in citrus groves, helping to pioneer their development in the area. He exported exotic bird plumes and alligator skins, served as a county commissioner, and when Fort Meade was incorporated in 1885 was elected chairman of its first board of aldermen. The same year, he and two other men built the town's first substantial school building. Earlier he had served on the building committee of the Methodist church. In short, he was involved in nearly every aspect of the town's life.

Despite his many interests Philip never lost touch with his heritage or religion, and at times he was able to bring a touch of Jewish culture to the frontier. An early example was the 1877 marriage of his daughter, Jennie, to Louis Herzog of Baltimore. The wedding was celebrated as a community event, with a Christian justice of the peace performing part of the marriage ritual while Philip "performed the Jewish part of the ceremony." As late as 1890 he was traveling to Tallahassee expressly to conduct services for Yom Kippur. It can be no accident that Philip was visiting with his brother Morris in Jacksonville within days of the 1882 dedication of the town's Ahavath Chesed synagogue.

In addition to his commitment to his heritage Dzialynski was also devoted to the cause of temperance, and in this may be seen a resolve not wholly alien to the frontier world in which he lived. A lodge of the Good Templars was founded at Fort Meade in 1877, and Philip likely was one of the organizers. Within a couple of years he had convinced most of the town's leading citizens to sign a pledge "that not a foot of ground should be leased, sold or given away whereon might be built a drinking saloon of any kind where intoxicating beverages are sold." Shortly thereafter the community's only saloon was consumed by fire, an event which local citizens felt was "evidently the work of an incendiary." When money was raised to rebuild it, the post office mysteriously was broken into and the money stolen. No culprit was ever apprehended.

The action taken to win Fort Meade to the temperance cause illustrates the violent nature of the south Florida frontier. Violence was no
stranger to Philip. He witnessed Julius Rockner being shot down from ambush just outside of town in 1877. During a short period in the early 1880s when he operated a store at Tampa, he again was looking on as one of the town's leading citizens gunned down another. In 1878 he personally was accosted by south Florida's most famous bandit, John W. "Hub" Williams, known as the "Robin Hood of South Florida." When Philip encountered the outlaw, however, it turned out to be Williams who had met his match. A Tampa newspaper reported the engagement:

Last Saturday afternoon a desperado named John Williams made an assault on Mr. Philip Dzialynski in his store with a drawn pistol and demanded $200. Mr. Dzialynski of course refused to comply with his demand, when the man Williams made several efforts to shoot him, but fortunately the pistol failed to fire. Mr. Dzialynski, being alone, finally made his escape from the store and locked Williams up inside while he went for assistance. Williams being unable to get into the safe, broke out before Mr. Dzialynski returned.

After escaping from Dzialynski Williams was shot and wounded by another Fort Meade man, but the desperado still made his getaway.

Morris in Jacksonville

Contrasted with Philip's frontier life, Morris Dzialynski lived in relative peace and quiet. The only incident hinting of the same kind of excitement occurred in 1870 when, as a result of a business dispute, he was indicted in Chatham County, Georgia, for "obtaining goods under false pretenses." When an officer was sent to Jacksonville to return him to Savannah for trial, however, a kind of frontier justice intervened. As reported by the Jacksonville newspaper, "The arrest having been made, officer Phillips started for the depot for the purpose of proceeding to Savannah on the evening train, but found his way impeded in such a manner by Messrs. M. Rosenberg, H. Berlack and a number of other friends of Mr. Dzialynski, that he was unable to reach the train before its departure." Morris never made the train, and in 1873 the Chatham County authorities dropped the whole matter.

The incident with Officer Phillips illustrates the personal popularity that still-young Morris enjoyed in Jacksonville. For the rest of his
life his popularity stood him in good stead, and, far more than his brother, Morris utilized it for political purposes. Before examining his political career, though, another mention of the similarities in the approaches Philip and Morris took to life and their communities might be useful.

Like most Jews in Florida and the South, the Dzialynski brothers relied upon merchandising for their livelihood. Philip operated general stores on the frontier. Morris specialized in the sale of carriages, buggies, and wagons in the state’s largest city, where he was also a leading auctioneer. Morris, in fact, was the only early Jacksonville merchant so to specialize, and the innovation brought him a certain statewide renown. In 1885 one report remarked,

> In the extent, variety, and character of his stock, the taste and judgment displayed in its make and finish, and the acknowledged style and durability of his vehicles, Mr. Dzialynski has won for himself a well-deserved reputation with the trade which entitles him to a front rank among dealers in this line of goods.⁹

Over time, Morris’s approach to merchandising was to prove far more economically reliable than was Philip’s.

Both men gained entrees into their communities through active involvement in fraternal organizations. In Savannah Philip was a member and officer of the Joseph Lodge, Independent Order of B’nai B’rith, and was instrumental in the organization of lodges of the Royal Arch Masons and the Good Templars in south Florida.⁹⁷ Morris was a leader in the Masonic Order at Jacksonville. In late 1867 he was elected an officer of Solomon Lodge No. 20, F. & A. M., and the following spring he helped organize Duval Lodge U-D.⁹⁸ The relationships both men formed through these fraternal activities proved useful to their business and civic careers.

Finally, both men remained close to their Jewish roots. To some extent Morris enjoyed an advantage over Philip in that there was a small Jewish community in Jacksonville. In July 1867 its members met at the residence of Morris’s father-in-law, Charles Slager, and “organized a society for the worship of God.” Morris was selected the group’s treasurer. Its modest goals were “to worship by reading of prayers and Canticles on the Sabbath and by holding Sunday schools
in both the Hebrew and English on every Sunday,” the town not being large enough to support a synagogue. Holiday services and activities were held in private houses and later in the Masonic Temple. In 1882 the town’s leading Jews gathered under Morris’s presidency to found Congregation Ahavath Chesed, the second oldest in the state. The members of the Dzialynski family were closely involved in the construction of its synagogue building on the corner of Laura and Union streets.

Morris as Politician

Building upon family connections and fraternal, religious, and business relationships, Morris early launched himself in the politics of Jacksonville and Duval County. Despite the Republican political hegemony there in the early years of Reconstruction, he was elected in 1868 as a Democrat (then known as Conservative) to the city’s board of aldermen. He eventually served nine years on the city council, but his early attempts to rise further in the highly partisan politics of the town were frustrated. In 1875 he ran against black Republican Thomas Lancaster for the position of city assessor and was defeated by a lopsided vote. The following year, however, in a campaign filled with charges of Republican corruption, the Democrats captured control of Jacksonville and Morris took the office denied him in 1875.

With the Redemption of Florida by the Democrats in 1877 came more opportunities for Dzialynski. Within days of taking office, the newly inaugurated governor, George F. Drew, appointed Morris Duval County treasurer. He was to serve four two-year terms. Soon he had also ascended to the presidency of the city council.

The Democrats were not expected to do well in the Jacksonville mayoralty election of 1881. Some reaction to Bourbon control of the state had set in, and the city’s Republican organization had offered as its candidate the chairman of the party’s state executive committee. The Democrats turned to Morris Dzialynski. The campaign was short but intense, with the key issue becoming Morris’s pledge to enforce Sunday closing laws. When the votes were counted, he had narrowly triumphed. “As the result was unexpected,” noted one observer,
"their [the Republicans'] surprise was as great as their mortification." 9

In 1882 Morris ran for reelection. He had been a law-and-order mayor who gave support to the interests of the business community, although he had broken an important campaign pledge by permitting certain saloons "to operate more or less openly on Sundays." The campaign soon centered upon the question of the open saloons, and Morris, feeling the political heat from the controversy, quickly ordered them all closed on Sunday. 10 As added insurance, and as he had also done in 1881, he ran not on the Democratic but rather on the "People's" ticket. His decision was a good one, for on election day he won by a slim majority of eighty-seven votes. 11

From the little information available on the Jacksonville mayoralty election of 1882, it seems that William Ledwith, the Republican candidate, would probably have been able to beat just about any opponent other than Morris Dzialynski. Accounting for a good deal of Morris's political strength were the qualities of personality that made him so likable. As was also true of Philip, he did not seem to take himself too seriously. On certain moral issues both brothers held firm commitments, but Morris was the more equable and easygoing of the two. The brothers also shared a great sense of humor, which Morris displayed to his advantage during the 1882 campaign. As related by the Florida Times, one such incident occurred as follows:

A TIMES reporter emerged from a group of excited politicians near Rice's grain store, and walking a few steps away came upon the two opposing candidates for the Mayoralty in calm and friendly conversation.

"I was saying," said Mr. Dzialynski, grasping the reporter by the arm, "that this has been, so far, the pleasantest campaign ever had in this city, and I have just told General Ledwith that if by any chance he should beat me, which no one knows better than he that he can't do, I shall, when I swear him in, make the best, and the longest speech ever made by a retiring Mayor. I will put him through in first-class style."

"Yes, said the General, "I know you will do that, Morris, and it is one of the things that gives me the greatest pleasure in defeating you."

"Enjoy it," said Morris, "it is a pleasure that cannot last." 111

Mayor Dzialynski declined to run for a third term in office. 112 He remained active in state and local affairs nonetheless. In 1884 he was
selected as an alternate delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, where he supported the nomination of Grover Cleveland. In Jacksonville he joined the board of trade, organized the town’s first baseball club, served as a port warden, volunteer fire captain, and fraternal leader, and involved himself in a myriad of other social and civic activities. In 1895 a group of conservative Democratic businessmen asked him to run for municipal judge on a “Citizens” ticket. He easily won election and remained in that office until his death.

_The Brothers’ Last Years_

As Morris was enjoying the fruits of his business and political careers at Jacksonville in the late 1880s, Philip’s fortunes had taken a turn for the worse. The exact circumstances are unclear, but his financial security at Fort Meade apparently had been undermined by the area’s perennial boom-and-bust cycle. By late in 1889 he had moved the family 10 miles north to Bartow, where he undertook, with Mary’s help, to manage the Orange Grove Hotel. Reports surfaced that he was ailing. After one such incident the local newspaper related, “The many friends of Mr. Philip Dzialynski . . . are glad to see his genial face on the streets again after his severe illness.”

Despite an 1892 announcement by Philip that he was moving the family to South Carolina, he remained in Bartow until 1895. In that year the move finally came about, but the destination was Jacksonville. Philip died there on January 16, 1896, in Morris’s home. “Mr. Dzialynski was a kind and genial gentleman,” said the _Florida Times-Union_, “and had a large circle of friends all over the state.”

Following Philip’s death, Morris and Rosa Dzialynski remained in Jacksonville, where Morris continued to serve as the city’s municipal judge. Rosa passed away suddenly on June 12, 1905, and her obituary proclaimed her to have been “a Lady Known and Beloved in Jacksonville.” When Morris succumbed to a stroke on May 5, 1907, it was said that “the taking away of his life partner, to whom he was perfectly devoted, was a blow from which he never recovered.” His body lay in state in the council chamber of Jacksonville’s city hall. Of his funeral services at the synagogue he had helped to build, a
reporter wrote: "The Temple was filled to its utmost capacity. Men and women from every walk of life were there. Jews and Gentiles were there to attend the ceremonies over the body of their beloved friend. Never before in Jacksonville has there been such a scene." He was buried not far from the body of the brother who had brought him to America.124

The Dzialynski brothers came to this country out of revolutionary strife and built for themselves and their families successful lives which earned them the respect of almost all who had the honor to know them. From the ruins of the Civil War they helped rebuild their communities and their state. In the process they never lost sight of their faith or their Jewish heritage. In their lives can be seen the lives of other Jews who put down their roots in the South before and in the aftermath of the war. They played a key role in helping to feed, clothe, house, and comfort a defeated people, and they extended the hand of support which helped permit the region eventually to emerge from despair. As Philip Dzialynski's obituary read, theirs certainly were "long and useful" lives.125

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1. Florida Times-Union (Jacksonville), May 6, 1907.
2. Ibid.
3. For information on the Revolutions of 1848 and Jewish involvement in them, see Priscilla Robertson, Revolutions of 1848: A Social History (New York, 1952).
6. Ruth Hope Leon, "The History of the Dzialynski Family" (January 1954), p. 1 (Jacksonville Historical Society Archives, Jacksonville University Library); Rowland H. Rerick, Memoirs of Florida, Embracing a General History of the Province, Territory and State; and Special Chapters Devoted to Finances and Banking, the Bench and Bar, Medical Profession, Railways and Navigation, and Industrial Interests, 2 vols. (Atlanta, 1902), 1:520.
8. A later biographical article on George I. P. Dzialynski, as well as family tradition, asserts that it was his grandfather, Abraham, who fought in the Polish revolt, and that his father, Philip, arrived in the United States as early as 1845. Biographical questionnaire of George I. P. Dzialynski in "Dzialynski Family File" (Haydon Burns Public Library, Jacksonville, n.d.); Pleasant Daniel Gold, History of Duval County Florida (St. Augustine, 1928), pp. 344–345; Bertha Zadek Dzialynski, "Within My Heart" (1944; original typescript in collection of Perry Coleman, Jacksonville; Xerographic copy in possession of the author), pp. 63–64.
11. Before arriving in Jacksonville, the family may have stayed for a short time in the area of Suwannee Shoals, north of Lake City in Columbia County. Leon, "History of the Dzialynski Family," p. 1; Rerick, Memoirs, 1:520; Florida Times-Union, January 16, 1896.
12. No Dzialynski is recorded as paying a state or county tax in Duval County until 1857. Gold, History of Duval County, p. 345; Duval County Tax Books, 1854–1857 (microfilm, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee).
13. Tri-Weekly Florida Sun (Jacksonville), January 22, 1876; Thomas Frederick Davis, History of Early Jacksonville, Florida (Jacksonville, 1911), pp. 117–118.
15. The Dzialynski home was located at the corner of Adams and Ocean streets. George I. P. Dzialynski is thought to have been the first Jewish baby born in Jacksonville. Gold, History of Duval County, p. 345; Natalie H. Glickstein, That Ye May Remember: Congregation Ahavath Chesed 1882–1982, 5642 (Jacksonville, 1982), p. 18.
18. Abraham, at his death, was aged fifty-two years. Henry was nineteen, and Jacob was twelve. Leon, "History of the Dzialynski Family," p. 1; Rerick, Memoirs, 1:520; Dzialynski family tombstone inscriptions, Old City Cemetery, Jacksonville.


23. Ibid., p. 258.


30. Ibid., p. 150.

31. By 1870 Julius Slager had removed to Jacksonville, where he was engaged in the insurance business. Purse's Directory of the City of Savannah, Together with a Mercantile and Business Directory (Savannah, 1866), p. 188; N. J. Darrell & Co., *Savannah City Directory for 1867* (Savannah, 1867), p. 83; *Savannah Daily Herald*, February 10, 1866; manuscript returns of Ninth U.S. Census, Duval County, Florida, schedule 1 (population).


34. Mary Cohen's relationship to the various Cohen families of Savannah is unclear, but in 1866 her brother, Jacob, was engaged in business there, and boarding with him was Philip's partner, Julius Slager. Chatham County records do not contain a record of Mary and Philip's marriage. *Savannah Daily News and Herald*, April 25, 1866; Leon, "History of the Dzialynski Family," p. 2; telephone interview with Rabbi Saul Jacob Rubin by author, Savannah, March 21, 1990;
Chatham County Marriage License Records, Office of the Clerk, Chatham County Courthouse, Savannah.

35. Savannah Daily News and Herald, April 25, 1866, and December 5, 1867; Savannah Daily Herald, March 6, 1865.


37. B'naï Berith Jacob asserts that it is the South's oldest congregation continually affiliated with Orthodox Judaism. Saul Jacob Rubin, Third to None: The Saga of Savannah Jewry, 1733–1983 (Savannah, 1983), p. 146.


40. Ibid., pp. 158–59.


42. Ibid.

43. Rerick, Memoirs, 1:520.

44. Florida Times-Union, June 13, 1905.

45. Rosalie later married Solomon Iseman of Jacksonville.


46. Dzialynski, "Within My Heart," p. 79; Florida Times-Union, June 13, 1905.


48. Ibid., p. 395.

49. Ibid.

50. Savannah Morning News, October 31, 1868.

51. See Philip Dzialynski to L'Engle, January 16, 1873 (folder 7, L'Engle Papers); Protest of the Cashier of the Merchants National Bank of Savannah, June 15, 1869 (Sanderson probate file).

52. Included in the Dzialynski family at Palatka were two new daughters, Fanny, born in Savannah in 1868, and Helena, born in the same city in February 1870. Not listed were brother John, by then twenty-three years of age, and sister Augusta, twenty-two. Either by 1870 or shortly thereafter both had married; John to Annie Jones, and Augusta to Solomon Iseman of Jacksonville, and his first child, Henry, was born there about 1875. Within two years he had returned to Jacksonville, where he made a living as a cigar maker. By the turn of the century John was engaged in business as a tobacco buyer with headquarters at Quincy, Florida. Savannah Morning News, October 25, 1871; manuscript returns of Ninth U.S. Census, Putnam County, Florida, schedule 1 (population), and Tenth U.S. Census, Duval County, Florida, schedule 1 (population); biographical questionnaire of George I. P. Dzialynski; Leon, "History of the Dzialynski Family," p. 1; Florida Times-Union, January 16, 1896; Tobacco Leaf (New York), July 21, 1897.

Jewish Contributions to the Rebuilding of the South

54. Florida Peninsular, June 7, 1871.
57. Peace River was known to many settlers as "Peas Creek." Laws of Florida (1870), pp. 98-99.
58. Sunland Tribune (Tampa), July 21, 1877.
59. Florida Peninsular, June 7, 1871.
60. Louise Frisbie, Peace River Pioneers (Miami, 1974), pp. 31-34.
62. Mary Cohen Dzialynski returned to Savannah. Her infant daughter, Helena, died there in October 1871. Savannah Morning News October 25, 1871.
63. Among those present at Bartow on July 8, 1871, for the installation ceremonies of the R.A.M. lodge was Morris's father-in-law, Charles Slager, who was Deputy Grand High Priest of the Most Worshipful Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Florida. Florida Peninsular, July 15, 1871.
65. Shofner, Nor Is It Over Yet, p. 251.
67. Osceola Sun (Kissimmee), September 18, 1975; H. L. Mitchell to E. M. L'Engle, April 28, 1874 (folder 75, L'Engle Papers).
68. Jacob R. Cohen participated as secretary of the meeting at which an incorporation election for Orlando was called on June 23, 1875. He was elected an alderman that year and reelected two years later. In 1877 he married Rachel Williams, daughter of Tallahassee merchant R. S. Williams, and moved to the latter town. He died there on November 5, 1901. Even Bacon, Orlando: A Centennial History (Chuluota, Fla., 1975), pp. 59, 61, 68-69; Orange County Deed Records, Book H-2, 309-12; Florida Times-Union, November 6, 1901.
70. Florida Times-Union, October 24, 1884.
73. George W. Wells, Facts for Immigrants: Comprising a Truthful Account of the Five Following Counties of South Florida; To-Wit: Hernando, Hillsboro, Polk, Manatee and Monroe (Jacksonville, 1877), p. 23.
74. The one interlude began in November 1879, when Philip moved his family to Tampa, where he opened a store. His partnership with C. L. Mitchell continued, however, and by March 1881 he and the family had returned to Fort Meade. Polk County, Deed Records, Book B, 413-15; Florida Times-Union, November 3, 1889; Sunland Tribune, November 13, 1879, April 1, 1880, and March 26, 1881.
75. Wire Street, Fort Meade's principal commercial district, was so named because the International Ocean Telegraph Company's line ran down its length. Hartridge to L'Engle, February 12, 1878 (Sanderson probate file); Sunland Tribune April 20, 1878; Brown, "International Ocean Telegraph," pp. 149-150, 158-159.
American Jewish Archives

76. Sunland Tribune, July 21, November 24, and December 8, 1877; Laws of Florida (1883), p. 123.
77. Sherman Adams, Homeland: Polk County, Florida (Bartow, 1885), p. 70.
79. Sunland Tribune, September 11, 1879.
81. Florida Times-Union, September 5, 1885.
82. Sunland Tribune, October 26, 1882.
84. Sunland Tribune, November 24, 1877.
85. Polk County News (Bartow), October 10, 1890.
86. Florida Daily Times, September 21, 1882.
87. The Good Templars, founded in 1851, were dedicated to "temperance, peace, and brotherhood with emphasis on personal abstinence from intoxicating drink." Sunland Tribune, January 5, 1878.
88. Sunland Tribune, October 26, 1882.
89. Ibid., April 2, 1881.
90. Bartow Informant, September 16, 1882.
91. Sunland Tribune, August 4, 1877, and June 10, 1880.
93. Sunland Tribune, October 19, 1878.
94. Florida Union (Jacksonville), December 20, 1870, quoted in Savannah Daily Republican, December 22, 1870.
95. Savannah Morning News, February 19, 1873.
97. Savannah Morning News December 24, 1868.
98. Florida Union, December 21, 1867; East Floridian (Jacksonville), March 5, 1868.
99. Pensacola had Florida's first Jewish congregation. Other officers of the Jewish society at Jacksonville in 1867 were: Charles Slager, president; F. Edrehi, vice-president; S. Felner, secretary; E. Robinson, P. Halle, I. Grunthal, trustees. Florida Union, July 13, 1867; Glickstein, That Ye May Remember, 19.
101. Savannah Daily Republican, February 12, 1869.
102. Rerick, Memoirs, 1:520.
104. Ibid., p. 195; Davis, History of Jacksonville, pp. 296–297.
105. Two weeks after Drew appointed Morris Dzialynski Duval County treasurer he also appointed Philip to the board of commissioners of Polk County. Since both were fervent Democrats, it may be assumed that they were active in Drew's campaign. Record of Commissioned Officers, vol. 1871–1879 (record group 156, ser. 259, Florida State Archives).
106. Rerick, Memoirs, 1:520.
107. Morris’s Republican mayoralty opponent in 1881 was Horatio Jenkins, Jr. Savannah Morning News, March 23 and 30 and April 3, 1881.


109. The final vote in the mayoralty election of 1881 was 559 for Dzialynski and 529 for Jenkins. Savannah Morning News, April 8, 1881; Davis, History of Jacksonville, p. 297.

110. Following his reelection, Morris placed the issue of Sunday closings in the hands of the city council. Controversy flared, and for the remainder of his term, stalemate ensued. Martin, City Makers, p. 138; Davis, History of Jacksonville, p. 198.

111. Martin, City Makers, pp. 138–140; Davis, History of Jacksonville, p. 198; Florida Times, April 4, 1882.

112. Florida Times, April 2, 1882.


114. Florida Times-Union, June 27, 1884.

115. Ibid., May 6, 1907.

116. Ibid., May 31 and June 19, 1895, and May 6, 1907.

117. Philip’s daughter-in-law, Bertha Zadek, attributed the decline of his prosperity to the effects of the freezes of December 1885 and January 1886 and to the yellow fever scare of 1887. Dzialynski, “Within My Heart,” pp. 109–110.

118. Florida Times-Union, November 11, 1889.

119. Polk County News, September 19, 1890.

120. Philip’s daughter Fannie had married Myer Greenfield of Beaufort, South Carolina, in May 1888, and he may have been planning to join them. After Fannie’s birth in 1868 and Helena’s in 1870, the Dzialynskis had either four or five additional children: Miriam or Minnie in 1871; Gertrude on October 17, 1874; Abraham Samuel in 1877; and Etta in 1878. An infant, “Little Eva,” is buried near Philip and Mary, and may have been their daughter. She was born October 1, 1875, and died April 9, 1877. Florida Times-Union, February 9, 1892; Bartow Advance Courier, May 30, 1888; manuscript returns of the Tenth United States Census, Hillsborough County, Florida, schedule 1 (population); Leon, “History of the Dzialynski Family,” p. 2; tombstone inscription, Little Eva Dzialynski, Old City Cemetery, Jacksonville.

121. After Philip’s death, Mary moved first to Tallahassee and then to Gainesville. She served in the latter community as manager of the Commercial Hotel. Her daughter Etta married Louis E. Cohen of Tallahassee there on March 19, 1902. Not long thereafter Mary returned to Tallahassee and lived with the Cohens. She passed away in 1935 and was buried with Philip in the Old City Cemetery, Jacksonville. Near Mary in 1910 lived her son Abe and his wife, Ellain, who had married in 1899. Son George married Bertha Zadek in Gainesville on May 7, 1882. Gertrude, who later served on the faculty of Gainesville’s East Florida Seminary as well as in numerous governmental positions, including personal secretary to Florida Governor Napoleon Broward and deputy collector of U.S. Internal Revenue for the District of Florida, married John Archibald Coronet. Florida Times-Union, January 16, 1896; Tallahassee Weekly Floridian, March 21, 1902; manuscript returns of Thirteenth U.S. Census, Leon County, Florida, schedule 1 (population); tombstone inscription for Mary Cohen Dzialynski, Old City Cemetery, Jacksonville; Leon, “History of the Dzialynski Family.”

122. Florida Times-Union, June 13, 1905.

123. Ibid., May 6, 1907.

124. Ibid., May 9, 1907.

125. Ibid., January 16, 1896.
Jewish Responses to the Integration of a Suburb: Cleveland Heights, Ohio, 1960–1980
Marc Lee Raphael

The pattern of Jewish exodus is a familiar theme in American urban history: from Detroit to Southfield, from Roxbury, Massachusetts, to Newton, from Baltimore's North Gay Street to Pikesville, from the South Side of Chicago to Skokie, from Harlem to the Bronx, from Los Angeles to the San Fernando Valley. During the 1960s, in American Jewish communities from coast to coast, changing neighborhoods—a euphemism for a steady influx of African-Americans—presented significant problems to Jewish residents and to leaders of Jewish institutions. Although the circumstances varied from city to city, there were enough common features for the historian, two decades later, to describe the process and to draw certain conclusions about this urban drama. After a brief look at the general pattern of change, we will focus on one community, Cleveland Heights, Ohio, and attempt to understand the dynamics of the Jewish response to integration.

Boston and Philadelphia

In Mattapan, on the southern border of Boston, where steady African-American movement into the suburb led to accelerated Jewish movement out of the area, the Boston Jewish Community Council spearheaded and staffed the Mattapan Organization (made up of Jewish and non-Jewish residents), whose goal was to keep the area viable. Its activities included block parties to discourage exodus and to educate the residents on real estate values, visits to real estate agents urging them to stop block-busting practices, and the establishment of a real estate service to find homes in the area for interested white families. The organization also developed a program to improve the educational system, develop neighborhood beautification programs (especially those focusing on public services and
neighborhood maintenance), get better recreational facilities for teenagers, and establish liaison with the police department. But these efforts were not paralleled by other Jewish agencies, nor by a significant attempt to maintain the community's Jewish institutions. The movement of Jews out of the area steadily accelerated, and Mattapan, half-Jewish as late as 1968, quickly emptied of Jewish residents.¹

In the Germantown-Mount Airy, or Northwest, area of Philadelphia, where 50,000 Jews lived at the beginning of the 1960s, served by one Reform, four Conservative, and two Orthodox synagogues, the African-American population steadily increased and the white population steadily decreased throughout the decade. Germantown High School went from 32 percent African-American enrollment in 1957 to 79 percent in 1968, Wagner Junior High from 17 to 90 percent in the same decade, while Kinsey and Rowen Elementary Schools, which had less than 1 percent African-American enrollment in 1951, were more than 90 percent African-American by the 1968–67 school year. By 1968, none of the seven elementary schools had less than one-third African-American enrollment, while the only other junior high school in the area, Leeds, was 40 percent African-American.²

It has been argued that the actual change in the neighborhoods may have been less than what is indicated by these figures, since they do not take into account the possibility of white families remaining in the area but sending their children to private schools. This was not the case, however, because every synagogue had fewer members at the end of the decade than at the start. Ramat El (Conservative) declined by 58 percent, West Oak Lane (Conservative) and Beth Solomon (Orthodox) each lost half their members, while Ohev Zedek (Orthodox) had 47 percent fewer members in 1969 than in 1965. By the end of the decade the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Philadelphia estimated the Jewish community in this area at less than 20,000, though not without a description more hopeful than accurate, calling this figure "substantial."

The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) carried on a variety of programs during the 1960s to attempt to stabilize Northwest Philadelphia. These included block meetings with synagogue leaders and individuals to prevent an accelerated exodus of Jews from the area, vigorous actions against realtors attempting to create
panic on specific streets of the Northwest, and the creation of education task forces to work with school officials facing problems related to integration. Concerned residents periodically established interracial dialogue groups, but these usually disbanded because of a feeling among the participants that communication between African-Americans and Jews had broken down.

Although experience and the facts might have made it seem likely that the change in racial character could not be stemmed, the JCRC leadership in Philadelphia concluded at the end of the 1960s that the "rate of change has been slowed down," emphasizing that "time is an ally." The leaders recommended to their parent organization, the Federation of Jewish Charities of Greater Philadelphia, a "multi-faceted program" and "maximum efforts" to affect the rate of change in the Northwest. Underlying this ambitious program of maintenance as well as other programs, old and new, were two mutually reinforcing approaches: a merchandising effort to encourage and assist young Jewish couples to purchase homes in the area, and, conversely, citywide programs to encourage the movement of African-American families into other suburban areas of Philadelphia. Both of these steps were central to the strategy Cleveland's Jewish leaders would adopt, though only the former offered any reasonable opportunity for success.

The Jewish Community of Cleveland Heights

The city of Cleveland Heights, which lies to the south and east of Cleveland on a plateau that was once an old lake plain, is an older, inner-ring, middle-income suburban community of spacious estates, ranch homes, colonials, bungalows, numerous apartment buildings in the grand old style, and some two-family structures. At the end of the 1960s it had the largest Jewish population of any Cleveland suburb. Incorporated in 1925, and largely developed between the world wars, the population of this community trebled in the 1920s from 15,396 at the start of the decade to 50,945 in 1930. Its development was aided by its convenient location to shopping, cultural facilities, Case Western and Western Reserve Universities, and the Cleveland Clinic, as well as by its developers' instant concern for extensive park and recreational areas; by the 1960s it had nationally recognized
schools and hundreds and hundreds of beautiful residences. It also had a large elderly population (18 percent of all residents were age sixty-two and over, one of the highest percentages in the United States), with significant pockets of Jewish aged. Together with the presence of a substantial Orthodox population, this made it the least transient Jewish community in the Cleveland area, something that would change dramatically in the early 1970s.

By 1960 the Jews of Cleveland had virtually abandoned the city proper. A local Jewish leader, Sidney Vincent, estimated that 1,000 Jewish students graduated from public high schools in Cuyahoga County in June 1961, of whom a maximum of six received diplomas from a Cleveland high school. In all grades combined, perhaps fewer than 250 of the 140,000 children attending Cleveland's public schools were Jewish. A "city without Jews" he called Cleveland as the 1960s began.

The Jews who left Cleveland and remained in the county overwhelmingly settled in one of eight eastern suburbs, and in those suburbs in which they settled they concentrated as heavily as they had done in the city itself. Besides having the largest number of Jews residing in any Cleveland suburb (16,300 in 1970), Cleveland Heights contained a tremendous capital investment in Jewish institutions and agencies. Although the $100,000,000 estimated replacement cost of these buildings (the Cleveland Jewish Federation's official figure) was surely exaggerated, no other community in the Cleveland area compared in terms of sheer number and value of Jewish institutional development.

Along the three-mile commercial strip of Taylor Road, the Cleveland Heights Jewish community had erected brick and concrete homes for the Hebrew Academy day school, the Jewish Family Service, the College of Jewish Studies, and the Bureau of Jewish Education. Orthodox congregants had built Or Chodesh, Shomrei Shabbos, and the Taylor Road Synagogue. Three blocks east of Taylor was the Community Temple; three blocks to the west, on thirty-three wooded acres astride a natural ravine, rose the copper-domed Park Synagogue. Not far to the north, the Temple on the Heights and the Jewish Community Center became landmarks, while Jewish storefronts boldly advertised kosher meat, kosher bakery items, and Jewish ritual objects. Other Jewish institutions in the Heights included the Mon-
Jewish Responses to Integration

tefiore Home for the Elderly, the Aliyah Center, B’nai B’rith Women, the Zionist Organization of America, Jewish Vocational Service, Hadassah, Council Gardens Apartments, Warrensville Synagogue, Oakwood Country Club, the Kangesser Transportation Depot, Berkowitz-Kumin Funeral Home, the mikveh, Sinai Synagogue, and Mayfield Temple.

The Hippie Influx

In addition to the problems facing aging communities everywhere (blighted business districts, old housing badly in need of repair and renovation, almost no new building during recent years), the Jewish community of Cleveland Heights faced two additional problems at the end of the 1960s: the dramatic takeover of a small area of the city by hippies and motorcyclists, and the quickening pace of integration. Together these newcomers brought tensions and fears to a community which vividly remembered uprooting itself after World War II in toto from its previous areas of settlement (the 105th Street and Glenville areas of Cleveland), which, by the early 1970s, were almost totally African-American.

The counterculture flower children with long hair, health food, music, and, most significantly, drugs virtually took over a major residential and shopping area (Coventry Village) during the second half of the 1960s. Hippies overflowed the Gothic apartments, cardboard "Store for Rent" signs seemed to be everywhere, and motorcycle groups (if not gangs) dotted the corners in the evening. In September 1966 the community newspaper noted that guns were in short supply as Cleveland Heights citizens were "arming themselves" against "violence in the streets." By the end of the year a dual stabbing had taken place after the Shaker Heights—Cleveland Heights football game, and the police had begun to probe recurrent reports of drug use (marijuana and LSD) among Cleveland Heights High School students. Before the end of the year the police had brought thirty-one cases to the attention of the county prosecutor. The following year ended with a two-month police investigation of juvenile crime in Cleveland Heights and the arrest of twenty youths aged thirteen to sixteen. What especially frightened some residents was the realiza-
tion that not only in Madison, Berkeley, and San Francisco but in Cleveland Heights, "all of the boys," according to the police chief, were "from good middle-class homes with professional parents." And 1968 was worse, with teenage drug busts and even the discovery of a "drug ring," juvenile crime, including armed robberies, and riot-control training for the police in anticipation of a summer of riots.

The counterculture, however visible, did not dominate Cleveland Heights. The high school still tied for the state lead in National Merit semifinalists. Six hundred students enrolled in the Cleveland Heights Hebrew Academy for the start of the 1968–69 school year, and they would learn in a new building housing a gymnasium, library, and classrooms. More significantly, the Heights Citizens for Human Rights, organized in 1963, was vigorously organizing informal coffees and evening meetings to help African-American and white residents of Cleveland Heights come to know each other better. In December 1967 the Cleveland Heights City Council declared war on blockbusting and approved a ban on "For Sale" and "For Rent" signs. In August 1968 municipal officials opened a realty clearinghouse with the "initial goal," according to the assistant city manager, "of attracting white buyers to areas that [are] now integrated." More dramatically, the educational officials gambled with a double school levy on the November ballot, and both the $15.4 million renewal levy and the $7.7 million new levy passed. More remarkably, this came only one year after the voters had approved a $4.2 million four-year levy by more than a two-to-one vote.

The Beginning of Integration

Cleveland Heights in 1960 was a very attractive suburb hugging the eastern edge of the city; it is not hard to understand why it should have appealed to African-Americans seeking suburban homes, schools, and parks. The civil rights enthusiasm of the late 1950s led a handful of African-American families to finally tackle a move to an all-white suburb, and the Heights was a stone's throw from the previous residences of most of the earliest African-American newcomers. One member of the Heights Citizens for Human Rights Housing Committee (HCHR) recalled in 1970 that when she moved to Cleve-
land Heights in 1960 “it was an all white city,” that “real estate salesmen would not even let Negroes into ‘open’ houses,” and that “if and when the black pioneer finally bought a home in the suburbs he, as well as the white seller, was usually subjected to violent harassment.” By 1970, thanks to vigorous efforts by the HCHR to change the policies of lending institutions and real estate agents, Cleveland Heights had become modestly racially integrated. Four percent of the population was African-American in 1970, mostly middle-income families who, according to one pioneer resident, wanted “attractive and inexpensive housing in pleasant neighborhoods with outstanding schools.” The steady movement of even this small number of African-Americans into Cleveland Heights during the 1960s was met with harassment, threats, stink bombs, and considerable discrimination; in May 1966 a house put up for sale by Fair Housing Inc. had dynamite tossed inside, and one year later, as J. Newton Hill and his wife Louise (an African-American couple) slept upstairs in the very same house, a time bomb exploded in their living room. Despite the harassment, the demand for housing in the Heights grew each year as Cleveland African-Americans sought better schools and better housing and, perhaps most importantly, found other suburban areas totally closed or much less hospitable than the Heights.

While all the neighborhoods of Cleveland Heights had some of the 1,200 African-American homeowners who lived in the suburb by 1970, most of the integration took place in a concentrated manner in the west-central area of the city (on or near Lee Road south of Mayfield Road), in a high-density Jewish residential area and on the edge of the center of Jewish institutional life. By 1969 there was enough evidence of change for the leaders of Jewish institutions to begin to formally meet together and discuss the future of their organizations and their community.

Concerns and Fears

In November of 1969 the president of the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland sent a letter to Jewish organizational leaders in Cleveland Heights noting that “there have been increasing signs of concern in the Taylor Road and Lee Road areas of Cleveland Heights
that the neighborhoods may soon be confronted by problems of substantial change," and requesting a formal meeting, under Federation auspices, in early December. The meeting was well attended, and while everyone voiced commitment to keeping the Heights open to citizens of all races, most expressed serious concern.15

Rabbi Engelberg of Taylor Road Synagogue began the discussion by stating that "the basic problem was a racial issue concerned with the rapid influx of Negroes into the area" and that "all the rabbis present at the last meeting of the Orthodox Rabbinical Council expressed great concern around the future of the area." Several participants felt that they were witnessing the beginning of what had happened in the 105th Street and Glenville areas of Cleveland a few years earlier, while others underscored the role of realtors who had been using scare tactics, exacerbating feelings and heightening tensions by preying on the residents' fears that the area would become predominantly African-American. Others, primarily officers of the Federation and its Community Relations Committee (CRC), worried about the Jewish community's investment in its institutions and the multimillion-dollar budgets that would be needed to rebuild them.16

Unlike Mattapan and other places, it would be difficult to exaggerate the rhetorical importance which the Cleveland area's Jewish leaders placed on this situation. Sidney Vincent, the executive director of the Federation, told a prominent lay leader that "this may be one of the most major issues ever to confront the community," a sentiment one finds echoed by several participants in the December gathering. But the direction to move in response to this situation was not at all clear; Vincent himself wished that "I were more confident as to what direction to lead the gang in after we establish there is a mutuality of interest."17

**The All-Out Approach**

By reflecting upon the response of Jews in similar situations in other American cities, we can discern at least three possible reactions by Jewish leaders and residents to the movement of African-Americans into an area of high Jewish concentration. Each of these was available to the Jews of Cleveland Heights in the late 1960s, and there is evidence that each of them was considered by some individuals.
The first alternative I will call the all-out approach. Those who held this view constantly pointed out (and almost always exaggerated) the millions of dollars which the Jewish community had invested in its institutions and the additional millions it would take to replace these institutions in another suburb. Moreover, some added the value of the homes and stores owned by Jews in the Heights and concluded that major changes would prove "astronomical."\(^{18}\)

The only practical solution, therefore, was for the community to make major investments of time, energy, and resources, far exceeding anything done up to 1970, to assure the area's stability. Among other measures, this would require an office and full-time staff members to work exclusively on the problem, as well as intimate and daily contacts with school authorities, city authorities, realtors, and representatives of other religious groups. There is, however, no evidence that the supporters of this position included contacts with African-Americans on their agenda.

Most important, perhaps, was the area of housing. Major sums would have to be invested in rehabilitation of all sorts, in encouraging and then aiding Jews to move into the area, and in revitalizing neighborhood businesses. Concomitantly, Jewish institutions which were then discussing a move eastward would have to be vigorously discouraged, and the rather polite discussion of this issue (filled with euphemisms such as "change") needed to give way to a forthright confrontation with the reality of the situation. On the one hand, the Taylor Road Synagogue's announcement in its September 1970 Bulletin that a karate (self-defense) class was organizing needed to be dramatically tied to the sporadic harassing of congregants who walked to the synagogue on Friday and Saturday evenings, the vandalism at the Lee Road mikveh, the auto racing in the parking lot of Park Synagogue, and the tire tracks on the Montefiore Home's lawn. On the other, the enormous demand of overseas Jewish needs on the Jewish community made quite problematic the expenditure of large sums for new facilities in another suburb when the present structures were relatively new. In sum, the proponents of this position believed that just as certain kinds of illnesses can be cured by massive injections of antibiotics but are little affected by mild doses, so the com-
munity had to be prepared for unprecedented decisions rather than modest measures if it was serious about dealing with the problem.\textsuperscript{19}

\textit{The Mortgage-Assistance Program}

An example of this massive input was the discussion which took place, quite preliminarily that December, about a mortgage-assistance program “to attract Jewish families into the area.” Already well established in some other cities, and attempted on a very small scale in another eastern suburb of Cleveland (Shaker Heights), this program called for the institutions in the Heights to contribute money (at a modest interest rate) which would be loaned for second mortgages to needy Jews attempting to purchase homes in Cleveland Heights. One of the first local leaders to develop this concept was Herman Herskovic, the president of Or Chodosh Synagogue. He suggested that since synagogues had modest capital funds, they might help guarantee their survival by loaning $5,000, $10,000, or even $20,000—guaranteed against default by the Jewish Community Federation—for mortgage assistance. The 5 percent return might be less than the 8 percent the money was earning, but the 3 percent loss was a minimal contribution to make sure that the synagogue remained in the Heights indefinitely.\textsuperscript{20}

This program was soon begun, with the Jewish institutions in the area contributing thousands of dollars ($50,000 was available by September 1971) for second-mortgage loans. It quickly became evident, as one Jewish leader, Elmer Paull, observed, “that the problem is in housing; those houses that are available are beyond the price of the young people who want to move in as they do not have the down payments.” Another leader, Harold Neustadter, was more specific: “I and my family are members of Young Israel and have three preschool children. I have been in the housing market for about eight months; I want to live in Cleveland Heights because of my identity with the Orthodox community. But I cannot find adequate housing; even a home with two baths and a family room is beyond my means. And there are other young couples in the same circumstances.” The coordinator of the program, Rabbi Marvin Spiegelman (known as the “kosher stabilizer”), recalled that “for the first time in my profession-
al life I was offering something that people were waiting in line for.” At the end of 1974 the chairman of the Community Relations Committee told a national audience at the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds that “while 60 homes had been purchased with mortgage assistance, at least four times that number have been attracted to the community because their initial interest in the community was stimulated by the thought of free mortgage money that could be available.”

The mortgage-assistance program was initiated with $20,000 from the Jewish Community Federation Endowment Fund; by the summer of 1975 the fund had provided $90,000 for reduced-interest loans. As more money was needed, the Endowment Fund agreed to guarantee up to $100,000 that would be provided by area synagogues and temples and used for loans to home purchasers. As the program developed through the first half of the 1970s, it became obvious that some of the clients were not in need of reduced-interest loans; rather they needed a more favorable arrangement in terms of interest charged and length of the repayment schedule. The Endowment Fund agreed to guarantee second-mortgage loans made by the Cleveland Trust Company, at a reduced interest rate, to clients approved by the Mortgage Advisory Committee and the board of the Hebrew Free Loan Association. By the fall of 1975 the Endowment Fund had made possible $250,000 in second-mortgage loans to over eighty families; there was not a single default. Figures from the end of the decade indicate that the mortgage-assistance program gave $575,775 in loans to 186 Jewish families to purchase homes. These loans purchased $6,126,526 of property which was appraised at over $9,000,000 in 1981, and every resident interviewed for this essay agreed that the loans had contributed greatly to the stability and vitality of the Heights.¹¹

They were probably correct. Mattapan had about 10,000 Jews in 1968, and by the mid-1970s virtually every one of them had left the community. Boston banks poured hundreds of thousands of dollars of low-interest mortgages into the area, but almost exclusively to African-Americans. Since the Mattapan Jews, according to a student of this community, realized the many advantages of the area and regarded it as a good place to live, “encouraging whites to buy in the area could have had an important demonstrative effect on the Mattapan people.”¹²
Several of the leaders of the Jewish community had already concluded, by 1970, that one key to the survival of Cleveland Heights as a viable Jewish community was to convince banks to help Jews move into the area as inexpensively as possible. Unlike Mattapan, where the rapid movement of Jews out as African-Americans moved in never ceased, and where virtually no whites bought homes at the same time as African-Americans, Cleveland Heights witnessed a steady influx of new white and Jewish homeowners. In 1974 only 9 percent of the Cleveland Heights homes sold by real estate brokers went to whites; by 1978, 42 percent of their sales were to whites. Even in the most heavily African-American school district of Cleveland Heights (Millikin), more than half the homes sold in 1978 were to whites (41 to 38). While many whites moved into the community without mortgage assistance, a significant number of Jews, especially in the latter half of the 1970s, chose Cleveland Heights over nonintegrated suburbs because of the availability of low-interest loans and mortgages.33

The Holding Approach

The second possible alternative, what I will call the holding approach, was articulated by a small number of important leaders in the Jewish community. Its proponents argued that the forces for change were so powerful that it was a delusion to believe that they could be overcome by any action on the part of the Jewish community—even in cooperation with other groups. However, these leaders and residents felt, although change was certain, it was important to avoid panic and to slow down the pace of the movement. Therefore, the proper strategy was to offer a modest number of mortgage loans in order to attract some Jewish families into the area, to work vigorously with the city on such problems as safety, school improvements (levies, curriculum, etc.), and legislation against blockbusting, to work with realtors to encourage fair housing practices, and to encourage neighbors to meet and discover that their differences of skin color were not matched by differences in basic values and concerns. The advocates of the holding approach opposed increased investment of either funds or staff time ("wasteful," said one leader), arguing that
the goal should be to slow down rather than attempt to reverse a process which, in any event, was beyond their control.

"Inevitability"

To the final approach I give the designation "inevitable"; those who held it started from more or less the same premise as the advocates of the holding strategy, but were skeptical about the efficacy of any measures. Instead, they suggested that communal energies should be directed vigorously toward planning the shape of the new community (which unquestionably would be in the more eastern suburbs). It was necessary, they maintained, to make sure that the planning was not done in a frantic and unplanned manner, so as to guarantee that facilities would be located wisely, that provision would be made from the start for the inevitable influx of Cleveland Heights Jews, and that all community decisions and efforts would be predicated upon the inevitability of this next step. This group was dominated by Jews who twenty years earlier had lived in a changing Cleveland neighborhood that had turned African-American and become a deteriorated community. They felt certain that the same thing was beginning to happen in Cleveland Heights. As Henry Lowenthal, an organizational leader, explained to his colleagues in 1970, "When the Negroes move in first comes fear, and then more speed; as one institution begins to move, this results in panic. Public safety is becoming a serious problem, especially after dark. Young people cannot be sent safely on the streets after dark. Everyone is moving out."

Everyone, of course, was not moving out. Two years after Lowenthal's statement, white students still comprised 94 percent of the Cleveland Heights school enrollment; and whites bought more than 75 percent of the homes purchased in the city during that year. But all the schools in Cleveland Heights had some African-American students, and the Jewish population of Cleveland Heights was slowly declining; it would decline from 16,300 in 1970 to 10,341 at the end of the decade—though most of this loss took place in the early 1970s and peaked in 1974. For those who espoused the "inevitable" school of thought, however, the increase in the African-American population and the decrease in the Jewish population doomed the community.24
The most vigorous proponents of this position were the rabbi and the president of the Temple on the Heights. Founded in 1866, by the 1960s this Conservative congregation served about 2,000 families and occupied a $2,000,000 Byzantine synagogue to which it had moved in 1925, but a considerable number of its members had left the Heights and moved to suburbs farther east. As early as October 1969, in a private meeting with two Federation leaders, Rabbi Rudolph ("Rudy") Rosenthal argued that Cleveland Heights was already at the point of "saturation" from African-American migration into the suburb. When one of the Federation leaders pointed out that "Negroes constitute only about three, or at most, four percent of the Heights," the rabbi responded that "there is no way to deal with the situation," as "City Hall has fumbled the ball on so many occasions that it is too late for them to recoup their losses."

Despite this position, Rabbi Rosenthal and the synagogue's president, Nathan Oscar, vigorously denied that "questions of integration" had influenced their decision to move out of the Heights and build a $6,000,000 edifice on a piece of property they had already purchased in the far eastern suburb of Pepper Pike. Oscar noted "proudly," according to one participant, that the new temple would entail the largest fund-raising campaign ever undertaken by a synagogue in the United States. Oscar said that the congregation had considered remaining in the Heights, but that would have necessitated "purchasing large pieces of property adjoining the congregation and developing these pieces of property as buffers—a 'maginot line'—between the institutions and the Negroes." The minutes do not indicate any response to this comment.  

Although the rabbi and the president of the Temple on the Heights did not represent the entire membership (a sizable minority of the congregation opposed their plan), the following month they sent a letter to every congregant announcing the move and including numerous inaccurate or incomplete statements about the pending moves of other Cleveland Heights Jewish institutions. Leaders espousing the all-out and holding approaches vigorously attacked the letters in a series of meetings with Rosenthal and Oscar, and the two synagogue leaders agreed to send out a correction letter. By early 1970 it was clear to all involved in Cleveland Heights that the leaders of the Temple on
the Heights epitomized the “inevitable” approach to the slow but steady increase of African-Americans in the Heights. For some Jewish leaders and Heights residents this signaled a “sense of fear and malaise that appeared to be growing in Cleveland Heights.” But as the 1970s unfolded it became clear that the Temple on the Heights stood alone, institutionally, in its decision to move out of the city.26

**Stabilization**

Despite the gloom-and-doom position of the Temple on the Heights, the Jewish residents of Cleveland Heights and the leaders of the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland (who did not necessarily live in Cleveland Heights) overwhelmingly supported every effort to keep the housing in the community accessible to all, and also favored, perhaps not so overwhelmingly, a dramatic investment of philanthropic dollars and professional staff time to encourage Jews to move into Cleveland Heights and to stabilize, if not improve, the quality of life in the community. The 1970s would witness numerous neighborhood-stabilization projects, funded and organized by the Jewish communal leadership, aimed not only at protecting the Jewish institutional investment in Cleveland Heights but at making the housing, schools, and social-cultural-recreational opportunities even better. As one resident explained, “Most of my friends and I welcomed integration, and seriously objected to moving the Jewish population out of the neighborhood. We hoped to maintain a viable Jewish community while, at the same time, guaranteeing every Negro a right to purchase the house of his choice.”27

The mayor of Cleveland Heights, Fred Stashower, an unabashedly old-fashioned liberal, was not so impressed with the Jewish commitment to Cleveland Heights, at least in 1969. He told a Federation leader that “with almost no exceptions, Jewish institutions in the area are concerned with their own well-being and almost totally uninterested in the welfare of the suburb. They will leave when it is in their best interest to leave without being concerned in the slightest as to what happens to the neighborhood after they go.” Maybe so, but not one other organization or institution besides the Temple on the Heights planned to leave Cleveland Heights. Nevertheless, the mayor
generalized from one announced move and a rumor of another (Bureau of Jewish Education), to the detriment of those in the community trying to offer alternatives to the "inevitable" approach.²⁸

By the late 1970s, in fact, it had become clear that the efforts of residents and organizations to keep Cleveland Heights an integrated and desirable community had paid off. The annual rate of increase in non-white enrollment had declined from 5.5 percent in 1975 to 3.5 percent in 1978; in those same years, whites purchased three of every four houses sold in the Heights, and the value of Cleveland Heights homes increased an average of 58 percent (according to a study by Women's Federal Savings and Loan).²⁹

**Interfaith Efforts**

One of the earliest steps taken by Jewish residents and leaders who had decided upon the all-out approach was the forging of alliances with Catholic and Protestant leaders in Cleveland Heights. It was obvious to many that decaying areas of the Heights needed modernization and rehabilitation, that a growing number of lending institutions were becoming reluctant to invest mortgage money in various areas of the Heights, that African-Americans needed assistance when they sought housing in some parts of the city, and that whites needed encouragement when they considered purchasing homes in the community. The five Lutheran congregations in the Heights (Bethlehem, First English, Gethsemane, Grace, and Hope), together with Forest Hills Presbyterian Church, sponsored a housing program which selectively rehabilitated single-family homes in Cleveland Heights and made them available to residents in need of more adequate housing. Jewish leaders observed this program closely and joined the Protestants in seeking white inhabitants for this housing. In addition, throughout the decade Jewish and Lutheran white women and men accompanied African-Americans, when asked, as they sought to purchase homes, and worked closely with realtors to guarantee fair housing opportunities to African-Americans who sought homes in the Heights. By the end of the 1970s, Jewish and Protestant organizations working together had secured a federal community-development block grant to purchase, renovate, and resell as separate units
twenty-four two-family houses over three years in a three-street area within the Boulevard School District, the census tract area with the highest concentration of Jews. Close relations developed with representatives of the three Catholic parishes (St. Louis, St. Ann's, and Gesu), which were strongly committed to neighborhood stabilization. Initially the Jewish-Catholic dialogue ranged over numerous topics, but it slowly began to focus on what the Jewish and Catholic communities in the Heights might do together to calm the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty that pervaded the community in the face of changing neighborhoods and white flight. What they shared in common was a concern for the future of Cleveland Heights. Together they successfully accomplished their first two goals: working to pass the monumental 1972 school levy that would rebuild most of the schools in Cleveland Heights, and lobbying the council for an ordinance against telephone solicitation in order to discourage real estate practices that were illegal and unethical. With this success, the Jewish and Catholic leaders decided to expand their base and created the Heights Community Congress, dedicated to promoting and maintaining an open and integrated community of the highest quality. By the end of the decade it could boast of extensive work in open housing, class-action lawsuits against realtors and anti-mortgage red-lining, housing inspection, senior citizens issues, recreation, schools, transportation, block clubs, and neighborhood associations.

Dealing with the Realtors

Realtors posed one of the most worrisome problems to Jewish leaders in the early 1970s. With most other suburban areas informally closed to African-Americans, or priced beyond the range of families seeking to leave the city of Cleveland, Cleveland Heights had become an attractive area to Cleveland African-Americans by the end of the 1960s. Jewish leaders devoted considerable time to meeting, both informally and formally, with individual realtors and real estate companies in the hope of discouraging what the Jewish leaders called blockbusting and the realtors defended as accepted business practices.
In 1960, when Cleveland Heights was an all-white city and real estate salespeople would not even show houses to African-Americans, there were no savings and loans or banks that would grant mortgages to African-Americans seeking property in all-white areas. African-Americans interviewed for this essay claimed that they were not shown listing books, so the rapidly emerging multiple-listing service was, in effect, for whites only, and realtors regularly discouraged African-Americans from looking at homes on streets that did not already have African-American residents.

Jewish leaders frequently noted that there was only one motive in real estate—money, and nothing quite as profitable as a changing neighborhood. With Noble, Oxford, much of University Heights, parts of Shaker Heights, and Beachwood closed to African-Americans in search of housing, white brokers steered almost every African-American family into already integrated areas of Cleveland Heights and used a variety of techniques to encourage whites to put their homes up for sale. By the early 1970s, with the passage of a state law which gave injunctive powers to the plaintiff, a 1965 housing addition to the Ohio Public Accommodations Law (Ohio Fair Housing Law), the federal civil rights legislation of the 1960s, the creation of several fair-housing organizations (most importantly, Heights Citizens for Human Rights, created in 1963), and the appointment of a human relations assistant to the city manager, housing discrimination in most areas of Cleveland Heights had become less acceptable.

Relations Between Jews and African-Americans

The Jewish leadership felt that the test of integration was the market, i.e., were both African-American and white people buying? By the second half of the 1970s, despite the precipitous drop in Jewish population in the first half of the decade, the answer was clearly yes. Not only whites in general but Jews specifically (aided significantly by the mortgage-assistance program administered by the Hebrew Free Loan Association and by housing directories issued by several synagogues in the city) were moving steadily into the community, while African-Americans had relatively free access to most areas of the Heights.†
In the early 1970s, when African-American–Jewish relations had yet to be placed under the microscope of the national media, the alliance between these two groups, at least in Cleveland Heights, was quite strong. One long-time African-American resident noted that "unlike the 1980s, when the ascent of Jesse Jackson into Democratic politics produced a furious debate among African-Americans and Jews and led the media to emphasize issues that drive African-Americans and Jews apart," in the 1970s, "on most issues, we shared the same basic values—the points of agreement outweighed the points of disagreement."32

One of the most interesting and significant programs of this period was that of joint African-American–Jewish educational endeavors stressing each group's history, culture, and contribution to American society. White students, from elementary grades through Cleveland Heights High School, were exposed to the academic study of the lifestyles, contributions, sensitivities, and values of African-American culture and, from time to time, listened to African-American writers and singers who visited the schools. Technically the curriculum emphasized the historical contributions of all minority groups, but there was an overwhelming emphasis on the black experience in Africa and America.33

One African-American parent, whose children were called "niggers" and physically threatened when the family moved to Cleveland Heights in the mid-1960s, responded by joining with a African-American neighbor to create the Committee to Improve Community Relations. This group demonstrated at the Cleveland Heights Board of Education on June 10, 1974 to, among other things, increase the percentage of African-American teachers and administrators, add African-American history and culture to in-service training for teachers, develop an African-American history and culture course at the high school level, investigate allegations of racist behavior by teachers, make Martin Luther King's birthday an official school holiday, and provide ongoing training of all staff in minority history and cultures. Talks between the CICR and school officials ultimately bogged down until the Department of Justice intervened. On April 1, 1975, the school officials and African-American residents signed an agree-
ment calling for the district to carry out most of the requests of the African-American residents.

Out of this agreement came the Inter-Racial Concerns and Curriculum Task Force Committee. African-American residents were encouraged to continually review books written by African-Americans or about African-Americans and make recommendations to the school authorities. One African-American resident recalls that she and her friends submitted scores of reviews which, according to school records, were evaluated seriously before books were purchased or in determining books to be removed from school libraries. Jewish residents played a key role on both sides of this nearly three-year struggle over alleged discrimination in the Cleveland Heights schools; the school board president and the assistant superintendent, who worked closely with African-American residents trying to work out an agreement, were Jews, while other Jewish residents joined with their African-American neighbors in demanding more African-American personnel.

In addition, African-Americans and Jews, working through numerous street and neighborhood associations as well as with the Urban League and the Jewish Community Federation, spearheaded a vigorous (and successful) drive to pass the $19.5 million bond issue in November 1972, which represented a dramatic instance of the faith that most of the community had in the school system and the community in general. The funds were used almost exclusively to renovate the physical plant of the schools, and most of these new facilities opened for the first time with the 1975-76 school year. In addition, African-Americans and Jews joined with administrators to secure federal funds, under Title VII of the 1972 Emergency School Aid Act; and in the 1975-76 school year almost $500,000 was budgeted for projects related to the process of integration.

Not all Jews and African-Americans agreed on the demands, of course, but the first half of the 1970s was striking for the extent of cooperation among Cleveland Heights African-American and Jewish parents seeking to educate their children in a pluralistic environment which would respond equally to both groups. Jewish residents not only worked with African-Americans to secure their demands but demanded that African-American parents support programs in
which non-Jewish students met Jewish artists and performers in residence, participated in workshops on human relations, were offered courses on the Holocaust (one such course even took students from Cleveland Heights High School on regular journeys of conscience to the death camps of World War II), and found themselves exposed to materials that Jewish residents of the Heights had carefully reviewed, just as their African-American counterparts had done.  

Outcome

In the last years of the 1970s, Cleveland Heights spent hundred of thousands of dollars on high-powered advertising campaigns designed to "sell" this city of about 60,000 to prospective white home buyers and current residents. As the decade came to an end, the city was the scene of a vigorous and diverse Jewish institutional life. With Taylor Road as the focus, ten synagogues (eight of which were Orthodox), five day schools (two Conservative), five afternoon schools, a Jewish community center, Jewish Family Service, Hadassah, five kosher butchers, and two kosher bakeries filled the area. And the 1980s would witness a continuous stream of young, (mostly) married, white couples moving into the community as well as the rapid gentrification of parts of the Heights. These newcomers included a substantial number of middle-class Orthodox Jewish couples, who provided considerable stability and growth for nearly every one of the Jewish institutions, and helped make Cleveland Heights a most attractive suburb for Jews and African-Americans in the 1990s.

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Notes


2. This paragraph, as well as the three that follow, is based on the archives of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Philadelphia. I am grateful to Michael J. Austin for his initial suggestion of this comparison.


5. In 1969, at Federation meetings, estimates ranged from $10 million to $20 million; in 1970, from $40 million to $50 million; in 1971, $50 million to $60 million; and by 1972, $100 million had become the standard figure. The estimated replacement value increased dramatically as the Federation's commitment to preserve Cleveland Heights increased.


7. Ibid., August 17, September 28, and October 12, 1967.

8. Ibid., January 11, February 15, March 7, April 25, and November 18, 1968.


10. Ibid., August 8, 1968.


17. Sidney Z. Vincent to Bennett Yanowitz, November 17, 1969 (Jewish Community Federation Archives).

18. The term “all-out” was used consistently by Robert Silverman, chairman of the Community Relations Committee in the early 1970s, to describe his program for Cleveland Heights.


21. Elmer Paull to Sidney Vincent, n.d. (Jewish Community Federation Archives); Cleveland Jewish News, October 18, 1974; Executive Committee Minutes, Jewish Community Federation, July 9, 1971 and June 21, 1973 (Jewish Community Federation Archives); interview with Rabbi Spiegelman; Endowment Fund Committee Minutes, Jewish Community Federation, June 21, 1973 and June 10, 1974; Alvin L. Gray, chairman of the Community Relations Committee, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland, report to the 1974 General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, Chicago, November 13–17, 1974 (Jewish Community Federation Archives).


23. Oral interview with Bennett Yanowitz, October 19, 1988; Executive Committee Minutes, Cleveland Heights Survey, School District Neighborhood Black Percentages, January 1978 (Cleveland Heights Board of Education); Barbara Mervine, Millikin Housing Information 1978, Millikin
Neighbors Board (Jewish Community Federation Archives); Real Estate Activity in Millikin, January 1974–December 1975, Millikin Neighbors Board (privately held); Creative Research Services, Cleveland Heights Survey by School District and Percent of Minority Households, 1978 (Cleveland Heights Board of Education).

24. “Questions and Answers on Cleveland Heights,” June 1972 and June 1973 (Jewish Community Federation Archives); Judah Rubinstein to Ted Farber, memorandum re population trends, May 21, 1979 (Jewish Community Federation Archives).


26. Minutes, Special Meeting of the Cleveland Heights Assembly, January 22, 1970 (Jewish Community Federation Archives); Nathan Oscar and Rudolph M. Rosenthal to Membership of the Temple on the Heights, April 1, 1970 (Temple on the Heights Archives); Executive Committee Minutes, Cleveland Heights Assembly, April 9, 1970; Heights “Open Doors” Planning Committee [of the Community Relations Committee], April 16, 1972 (Jewish Community Federation Archives).

27. Fay Fine to Howard Berger, October 15, 1969 (Jewish Community Federation Archives).


30. Minutes, Steering Body for Joint Social Ministry of Cleveland Heights Lutheran Congregations, January 27, 1970 (privately held). See also Family and Housing Characteristics for 1977 Real Property Inventory of Metropolitan Cleveland (Cleveland, n.d.).

31. Oral interviews with Bennett Yanowitz, Bob Soltz, Barbara Heald, Rose Drake, Robert Silverman, Al Abramovitz, Marvin Spiegelman, and Doris Allen. The mortgage-aid program provided interest-free loans up to $3,000 and, through an arrangement with a local bank, second-mortgage loans at 9 percent interest which would be guaranteed by the Federation up to a total of $70,000. Alvin L. Gray, chairman of the Community Relations Committee in 1974, told a national audience at the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds that same year that “at least [240 families] have been attracted to the community by the mortgage program.”

32. Oral interview with Doris Allen.

33. Oral interview with Rose Drake.

34. Charley J. Levine, “Jews and Integration in Cleveland Heights,” Congress Monthly 42, no. 5 (May 1975); Cleveland Heights–University Heights Board of Education to Committee to Improve Community Relations, July 15, 1974 (Cleveland Heights Board of Education); K through Six Integrated Curriculum, June 24, 1974 (Cleveland Heights Board of Education); Bernice L. Van Sickle to Walter Kincaid, February 12, 1973, Belva A. Singer to Albert Abramovitz, June 24, 1974, Leonard Freyman to A. J. Abramovitz, June 20, 1974 (Cleveland Heights Board of Education); Community Relations Service, Department of Justice Press Release, April 2, 1975 (Cleveland Heights Board of Education); oral interview with Doris Allen and Al Abramovitz.

The Genesis of the Special Relationship Between the United States and Israel, 1948–1973

Bat-Ami Zucker

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, a special relationship has developed between the United States, one of the largest and most powerful nations, and Israel, one of the smallest Middle Eastern countries. Its most obvious and profound expression has been America's continuing support for Israel's existence and safety. Despite occasional discord and contrasting trends among American policymakers, especially those who consider support for Israel to be a burden on American Middle Eastern policy, the fundamental sympathy and support for Israel has not diminished. Israel is perceived and discussed in favorable terms, and support for Israel enjoys wide appeal, bipartisan consensus, and acknowledgment by presidents and the Congress. The long-standing U.S.-Israeli relationship is unusual even among friendly nations. The fact that it has endured despite the absence of any formal arrangement, even at times when strategic logic dictated against strong support for Israel, suggests that strategic motives alone cannot fully explain the relationship between the two countries.

Various studies, both pro- and anti-Israel, offer explanations of America's decisions with regard to Israel that focus mainly on domestic political considerations. This study will attempt to illustrate the unique pattern of the American-Israeli relationship as a bond that combines a range of factors, but is dominated and backed by sincere public sympathy and sentiment. Both domestic and international politics no doubt contribute their share, yet it is the widespread and established concern for Israel that developed in the United States after World War II that is the cornerstone for American support.

The Origin of America's Pro-Israel Policy

Our study focuses on the period from the establishment of Israel in 1948 to the Yom Kippur War in 1973. It is our belief that the special
relationship between the two countries was formed and established then, when Israel's enemies were continuously threatening to destroy the state. This is not to say that U.S.-Israel relations have undergone major changes since 1973, though a different pattern has indeed developed now that peace initiatives have become the dominant element in U.S. Middle Eastern policy. Rather, it reflects the fact that America's relationship with Israel between 1948 and 1973 differed significantly not only from its relationships with other friendly countries during the same period but also from its relations with Israel since 1973.

What is of particular interest to us is an analysis of how and why U.S. policy toward Israel—only one of the small states in the Middle East with which the United States maintains friendly relations—has taken a completely different form from that followed elsewhere. Although research shows that American attitudes to Israel are dominated by a sense of moral obligation, which in itself is somewhat unusual even among friendly nations, moral obligations have also been a factor in U.S. relations with other countries, albeit to a lesser degree. Only in the case of Israel, however, has a moral commitment to the safety of another country been articulated by every single American president since 1949. Furthermore, the notion that the American commitment to Israel is outside the realm of political debate has not only been reiterated by every administration, but has also been manifested in the bipartisan record as well as in the media. In an exclusive interview published in *U.S. News and World Report*, Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger described the U.S. commitment to Israel in these terms: "We have a historic commitment to the survival and the well-being of Israel. This is a basic national policy reaffirmed by every administration." Prior to that, at a 1967 meeting in Glassboro, New Jersey, when Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin asked President Lyndon Johnson why Americans supported Israel against the Arab world, the latter simply replied: "Because we think it's right"—an argument rarely used in diplomatic circles. A June 1967 *Washington Post* editorial expressed the same idea when it stated that "Israel’s moral claims upon the Western world . . . make it unthinkable for this country, or its allies, to permit the Jewish state to be destroyed."
The humanitarian aspect of America’s support for Israel is often referred to in administration statements. In discussing the bond between the United States and Israel, Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Rush told a Senate appropriations subcommittee on November 5, 1973 that “there is a strong humanitarian interest . . . and in a very strong and nonpartisan way this country considers itself a friend of Israel, who will help Israel in time of trouble and at other times.”6 And the unique nature of the commitment has been stressed as well; for example, by Under-Secretary of State Joseph Sisco, who said: “The United States has supported the security and well-being of Israel . . . with a constancy rarely surpassed in the history of relations between nations.”7

**Cold War Considerations**

The uniqueness of America’s relationship with Israel has drawn much attention.8 Even though their relationship has not been formalized, the two countries are bound together by a bond that in practice has been as strong as any alliance, written or unwritten.9 Fascinated by the tie between Israel and the United States, especially in view of the immense disparity “in size, power, and international role between the two countries,”10 many scholars have sought to examine its motivations.

In the 1950s, some argued that it was the policy of containment,11 adopted shortly before Israel’s establishment, that led to America’s friendly and supportive attitude, stressing that Israel, as a stable democracy, fit nicely into the American plan to prevent Soviet expansion in the Middle East.12 However, this view fails to take into consideration the cruel fact that a state with a Jewish population of less than 2.5 million (at that time) could hardly be counted upon as a strategic asset in the face of the many large Arab states that criticized any and all American assistance to Israel as a menace to their own well-being. Moreover, in a period when courting the Arab countries was deemed necessary to bring them into the Western defense system, and when Europe was still totally dependent on these countries for its oil, it would seemingly have made more strategic sense to let Israel stand on its own.13 Indeed, this is precisely what State Department specialists recommended, considering Israel a burden to the United States and an obstacle to friendly relations with the Arab countries.14
In view of the preceding analysis, one must conclude that there was, and still is, more behind the American-Israeli special relationship than strategic motives. Even Senator J. William Fulbright, a leading figure in pro-Arab circles, concluded in August 1970 that "America [was] tied to Israel less by strategic consideration than by bonds of culture and sentiment." Yet there is no doubt that anti-Soviet objectives also played a role in the identification of American interests with Israel's, especially during the Johnson administration. The tendency of the United States to refrain from associating the Arab countries with the Western defense zone was already evident in the late 1950s. Keeping to the old objective of retaining America's position, U.S. policy, during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, was to protect America's interests against Soviet expansion by cultivating friendly countries—Arab states as well as Israel—on an individual basis. It was in this context, especially after the Six-Day War in June 1967, that Israel, politically stable, militarily powerful, and friendly, was deemed a valued asset in stabilizing the balance of power in the region. As Senator Henry Jackson said in 1971, "The Israelis are today in the front-line in resisting the historic imperial ambitions that lie behind Soviet policy. . . . They deserve our support because they are allied with the security interests of the United States in a vital region of the world."

To sum up, it was not containment as such, but the broader global objectives of American foreign policy, especially in the Middle East, that facilitated U.S. support for Israel. For, despite differences in tactics and occasional discord, support for Israel continued to be a central element of American Middle East policy and "a matter of concern for all Americans."

The fact that the U.S. commitment to Israel continued even when strategic logic dictated against it leads us to conclude that the relationship between the two countries could be explained, as Senator Jackson put it, by "shared values, cultural affinities and a common ethical and religious heritage."

Israel as a Sister Democracy

First among the factors that contributed to widespread American sympathy and goodwill toward the State of Israel during the period
from 1948 to 1973 are the common beliefs shared by the people of both countries. Israel’s commitment to maintaining a democratic form of government—unique in the Middle East—guaranteed American support from the outset. In 1950, the Washington Post called Israel "an example of genuine democracy." And in 1960, the New York Times described it as "an outpost of democratic government and haven for the oppressed."

The Congressional Record of the late 1960s is replete with citations representing Israel as "the democratic oasis in a desert of dictators" and as a "solid bastion of freedom and democracy against the forces of aggression and totalitarianism."

More than any other new nation born in this century, Israel has proved the indomitable strength of democracy. The miracle of Israel lies not alone in the flourishing democracy it has created in the Holy Land, but in its unique success in spreading the idea and practice of democracy . . . to other lands, to emerging nations of Africa and Asia.

In the decades following the establishment of Israel, the New York Times and the Washington Post competed in praising the new state as "the showplace of democracy" which had accomplished the impossible, the Times even using phraseology similar to that in Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address to express why America so closely identified with Israel, which was "conceived in idealism and born in fire." A positive reaction to the small and distant state seemed to come naturally to the American public, since "the concepts of social justice and democracy upon which [Israel] was founded are among [America’s] most cherished ancient traditions."

Admiration for a Nation of Pioneers

Similarities in the origins and history of the two countries further stimulated American understanding, sympathy, and nostalgia. Much like the United States, "Israel is a nation of different peoples . . . endeavoring to build a new and just society." Its pioneering spirit was often compared with that of the American pioneers, thereby evoking reminiscences of American’s glorious past. For Americans, dedicated to the idea of achievement and progress, Israel’s accom-
plishments were seen as "little short of a miracle;".3: "If ever a desert has been made to blossom like the rose, modern Israel it is."32 Moreover, Israel's economic success was seen as an example of what could be attained "through determination, hard work and application of modern technology."33 Finally, the Israelis themselves were admired as young, gallant, and courageous, and were praised for their industriousness, determination, and sacrifice—an outcome of the "unconquerable strength of a pioneer spirit welling up from two thousand years of tragic history."34

Christian Sympathy for Israel

Reinforcing the effect of a common democratic heritage and pioneering background were America's religious and historical ties to the Old Testament, which facilitated the development of a natural kinship with the land of the Bible and people of the book. The link between the ancient Hebrews and the modern Israelis was played up repeatedly. Although many Americans were reluctant to identify the cause of religion with that of a state,35 and it has always been difficult to establish anything like a consensus concerning Israel among America's Christians,36 the absence of a united position on Israel does not mean that Americans do not have strong feelings regarding the security of the Jewish state.37 Furthermore, for many, Israel's very existence is a proof for the realization of biblical prophecies. The vision of Israel as the land where the biblical happenings took place stimulates the American imagination. "The Bible stories," President Johnson reminisced at a B'nai B'rith meeting in 1968, "are woven into my childhood memories as the gallant struggle of modern Jews to be free of persecution."38 Once the link between the Bible, the Holy Land, and Israel was established, "a profound bond" was erected between "the Jews of Israel and the Christians of America,"39 the latter seeing "the hand of the Lord in the creation of Israel and . . . in bringing the Jews back to Israel."40

A poll in June 1967, when Israel was engaged in a war to prevent its extinction, indicated that support for Israel stemmed, among other reasons, from "sympathy for the 'little guy' fighting the 'big guy'."41 Involved here was not only the traditional American concern for the
underdog, but the American attachment to the Bible as a source of moral and social justice. In this respect, the Puritan heritage, which identified the Old Testament with supreme good, can be said to have had an impact on American attitudes toward Israel.

**American Jews and Israel**

If believing American Christians were emotionally affected by the vision of Israel as the land where biblical promises were fulfilled, this vision promoted a much deeper bond between American Jews and the new Jewish state. It should, however, be stressed at the outset that the American Jewish attitude toward Israel—affectionate and consistently supportive as it has been—arose, for the most part, from the wellsprings of the Jewish experience in America. In this sense, it reflects an attitude similar to that of Christian Americans. Thus, although most American Jews do not seek to disassociate themselves from their Jewish identity, they primarily visualize themselves as Americans and act accordingly. Therefore, American Jewry's moral, political, and financial support for Israel reflects general American beliefs as well as an identification with Judaism and solidarity with the Jewish people. To most American Jews, this identification is "visceral, profound, overwhelming beyond fighting." As Melvin Urofsky puts it, "American Jews have proved that they are also very much Americans, and their predominate value system is an amalgam of Jewish teachings and American democratic norms." When administrations have considered adopting a less sympathetic attitude toward Israel, therefore, American Jews have opposed such changes "as Americans, as men and women dedicated to freedom, to democracy and humanity." In sum, whether for religious or traditional cultural reasons, American Jews have given Israel and its well-being increasing attention since 1948.

No doubt it is the sense of belonging to one family, of sharing a heritage of faith, history, and fate, that has determined the American Jewish attitude toward Israel. Although American Jewry is a highly complex community composed of diverse groups and viewpoints, and its members often differ in regard to Israel, the American Jewish community has nevertheless evinced strong attachment to the Jewish
state and acknowledged its sovereignty by helping to provide for Israel's financial as well as political needs.  

The fact that the American Jewish community was, and still is, "unified and motivated to work in Israel's behalf" reflects Israel's having become "the crucial operative element in shaping organized Jewish life." In this regard, American Jewry views relations between itself and Israel as similar to that of "partners . . . [in] a real marriage between two highly strong individuals facing an unfriendly world together." To follow the same image, American Jews indeed represent a strong partner in a marriage. After having succeeding in establishing their status as Americans in American society, they can now identify with Israel overtly without being accused of parochialism. Their ability to profess their deep connection with and concern for Israel points to the democratic nature of American society as well as to their acceptance and acculturation. This has been manifested time and time again, for example, in the actions of the many Jewish members of Congress who have been willing and able to demonstrate their commitment to the survival and safety of the Jewish state by forming an "in-house lobby" for Israel, taking leadership roles in resolutions supporting Israel and providing it with additional aid.

Analyzing the American Jewish community after World War II, Jacob Neusner explains that "after four generations [in the United States], to be Jewish is a mode of being American, taken for granted by Jews among other Americans, and no longer problematical." With their position in America established, Jews now felt safe and secure enough, in both their Jewishness and their Americanism, "to challenge major aspects of the United States' foreign policy, with regard both to the Middle East and Soviet Union." Thus, when Richard Nixon and George McGovern tried to make aid to Israel a political issue during the 1972 presidential campaign, the eight top national Jewish organizations banded together to deplore such appeals to American Jews, stressing that "Jews vote as individual Americans . . . according to their individual judgments," and have "a deep interest in the broad range of domestic and foreign policies involved in the present campaign." An editorial in the New York Times confirmed the authenticity of this statement: "All studies indicate that the Middle East problem is only one of many entering into
the voting decisions of Jewish Americans now and in the past." Even fiery Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, who was well known for feeling that all Jews belonged in Israel, acknowledged that American Jews "have only one political attachment and that is to the United States of America." Nevertheless, given America's freedom and democratic political system, the Jewish community could openly express its loyalty to the State of Israel, "the national home of the entire Jewish people," whenever it deemed such expression necessary to Israel's security. Indeed it is the successful interrelation between Jewish and American beliefs that has allowed American Jews the unique position of being fully dedicated to and identified with America and its interests, both domestic and foreign, and at the same time to acknowledge their Jewishness by supporting Israel. To those who cast doubt on the Americanism of Jews who support Israel, implying that this means a watered-down loyalty to the United States or a possible clash between their American and their Jewish interests, it must be pointed out that two sets of values operate on the American Jewish scene, one dealing with inner substance and the other with civic identification. Whereas in their support for Israel American Jews express their inner being and Jewish identity, which neither is nor should be defined in terms of civic loyalty, their attitude toward the United States has always evinced their political and social fidelity as citizens of that country. Indeed, it is the harmony between Jewishness and devotion to what America stands for that has motivated American Jews to involve themselves in American political life far beyond their proportion of the U.S. population. In other words, it is their feeling that in the United States they can participate on equal terms that gives them the sense of security to combine their civic loyalty with an overt declaration of their faith.

The Pro-Israel Lobby

The pro-Israel lobby in Washington reflects both aspects of American Jewish life. As Hyman H. Bookbinder once put it: "What's good for American society is terribly important to the Jewish community." Similarly, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), a
Washington lobby representing "the totality of Jewish influence in America," functions to aid Israeli interests within the broad parameters of the American political system, "on the basis of American interests." Indeed, almost all responsible American Jewish activists who engage in the support of Israel repeatedly underline that they are acting as Americans.

In this regard, AIPAC has always stressed that it is an American, not a Jewish lobby. I. N. Kenen, who founded the American Zionist Council, which became AIPAC in 1954, was convinced from the start that in order to succeed, the organization would have to be "an American outfit, run by Americans with taxable—not tax-free—dollars." Thus, while AIPAC engages in activities aimed at influencing presidents and members of Congress to provide for the safety of Israel, its goals have always included the creation of a bridge between the Jewish communities of Israel and the United States and the promotion of friendly relations between the two countries. Furthermore, despite its obvious concern for Israel, AIPAC does not follow the Israeli line, as its director, Morris Amitay, stressed in 1975 when he stated that his organization did not maintain any formal ties with the Israeli embassy. Nonetheless, as a one-issue organization committed to the safety of Israel, AIPAC has pressed for the same things as the Israeli government.

Given the fact that American Jews constitute an important interest group, it was likely from the start that an energetic pro-Israel lobby would have a good chance of making itself heard and listened to. While Jews made up only about 3 percent of the general American population and 4 percent of the voting population during the period we are considering, their concentration in specific regions, their education, wealth, and unusually broad involvement in politics, and their strong feelings for Israel made the Jewish vote an important consideration for many policy-makers, as it still is. The centrality of the State of Israel in the American Jewish mind, together with the importance of the Jewish vote in American politics, has facilitated the active participation of the Jewish community in pressing for pro-Israel legislation, thereby adding yet another dimension to the special relationship between the United States and the State of Israel.
Although the Israel lobby has been credited with extraordinary successes and has acquired a reputation as a “highly organized and well-endowed association” that is “the most powerful, best-run, and effective foreign policy interest group in Washington,” critics of the strong U.S. commitment to Israel have taken a less positive view of the lobby’s influence. Thus, Senator Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and a long-time foe of the United States-Israel alliance, proclaimed that the lobby “can count on 75 to 80 votes on anything . . . [in which it is] interested in the Senate.” More balanced appraisals describe the lobby as “neither insidious nor so overwhelmingly powerful.”

Although the exact role and the degree of success of the Israel lobby have always been disputed, there does seem to be agreement that whatever strength it has lies in its being in accord with the generally positive American attitude toward Israel.

**Israel and the Holocaust**

Support for Israel between 1948 and 1973 was widespread in Congress, government, and the general populace, all of whom favored Israel’s “existence, integrity and security.” The positive American attitude toward Israel, together with the historical, cultural, and democratic similarities between the two countries, facilitated pro-Israel activities by non-Jewish Americans and enabled American Jews to achieve peace of mind and soul regarding their fellow Jews outside the United States. Moreover, the creation of the Jewish state led to increased identity with their own Jewishness. In addition to the crucial role Israel played in shaping and strengthening the self-identity of American Jews, its activity represented a total contrast to the horrors of the Holocaust, for “Israel stood, symbolically, as the redemption of the Holocaust; Israel made it possible to endure the memory of Auschwitz.”

This aspect of Israel’s establishment led to two diametrically opposed attitudes toward the Jewish state. For some, Israel’s democratic sovereignty and independence were a triumphant negation of the Holocaust, or as survivor and author Elie Wiesel put it: “Behind the army of Israel stood another army of six million ghosts.” On the
other hand, and perhaps integrally connected with the first, was the view—especially on the eve of the Six-Day War and during the Yom Kippur War—that focused on Israel's possible destruction and the consequent fatal blow to both Jewishness and Jewish status in the United States.81

Among proponents of this latter view, "there was a widespread feeling that the lives of all Jews, that the fate of Judaism itself, hung in the balance. If Israel perished then Jews everywhere would perish . . . because their faith could not survive a second onslaught."82 Among those who held this view was Senator Rudy Boschwitz of Minnesota, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Sub-Committee on the Middle East during the Six-Day War. Born in Germany into a family that managed to escape in 1933, Boschwitz has always been aware of his responsibility as a Jew and as someone who could have been a victim of the Holocaust. This, he acknowledged, "has given me more of that so-called Holocaust mentality than most people would otherwise have had. . . . I have a great sense of the dangers facing Jews and Israel."83

As indicated above, these two attitudes combined to underscore the moral commitment to the security of Israel as a guarantee against a second Holocaust. For, "were Israel to be destroyed, then Hitler would be alive again, the final victory would be his."84 This feeling is not limited to Jewish circles. The United States government has always emphasized its role in the establishment of Israel, and has sometimes expressed its responsibility and moral commitment to the Jewish survivors of the Nazi slaughter of six million Jews.85 In the words of Adlai Stevenson in 1956, "Israel is the symbol . . . of man's triumph over one of the darkest sorrows in human history—the attempt of Adolf Hitler to destroy a whole people."86

Conclusions

To sum up, it is the combination of American ideals and the aspirations of American Jews that has been largely responsible for the willingness of the U.S. government to respond to and cooperate with American Jewry. This parity of ideals and common interests has made possible an American policy toward Israel that generally reflects support of American Jewish concerns when Israel's enemies
have continuously threatened to destroy the state. No less important in this regard is the fact that initiating, launching, or supporting Jewish and/or Israeli goals has often proved politically rewarding.87

Although some government officials and members of Congress have criticized the pressure put on the United States by interest groups in general and by the Israel lobby in particular, the majority of the American public believes in the justice and validity of Israel’s cause. As Senator Charles McC. Mathias of Maryland has concluded: “. . . even if there were no Israel lobby, the American people would remain solidly committed to Israel’s survival.”88

Although the pro-Israel stance in Congress and in successive presidential administrations has no doubt come about because support for Israel combined the pursuit of U.S. national interests in the Middle East with electoral profit in the form of Jewish political support, it has been the sympathy, appreciation, admiration, and identification of the American public at large with Israel’s democratic and moral values—with its heritage and long-overdue homeland—that is really behind the special and unprecedented relationship between the two countries.

This study derives from my long-standing interest in the American-Israeli special relationship, particularly during the period from 1948 to the Yom Kippur War in October 1973. It is of historical interest because it sheds light on the events themselves and, even more, because it enables us to better understand the continuity of the unique relationship between Israel and the United States after 1973. Before the Yom Kippur War this relationship flourished under constant Arab threats to destroy Israel; since then the political atmosphere in the Middle East has changed. Relations between the two countries are now dominated by a different set of priorities in which American peace initiatives have more than once conflicted with Israel’s political orientation. However, the bond established during 1948–1973 has held despite the more open American criticism of Israel and the occasional tension between Washington and Jerusalem.


2. With regard to the media, our examination focused on two representatives of the elite press, the *New York Times* (hereafter NYT) and the *Washington Post* (hereafter WP). They were singled out because they are considered the most prestigious and influential papers in the United States; so much so, in fact, that successive administrations have been sensitive to the views presented on their editorial pages. For the media’s attitude, see, for example, NYT editorials, February 26, 1956, September 10, 1968, and September 2, 1969; WP editorial, “Israeli Shift,” October 19, 1950.


7. An address to the American Academy of Political and Social Science on April 11, 1969; *Department of State Release*, no. 78, p. 2.

8. See, for example, Robert F. Drinan, *Honor the Promise: America’s Commitment to Israel* (New York: Doubleday, 1977). Even a pro-Arab analysis argues that “such a moral commitment to another state is unique in the annals of international relations and foreign policy”; Rubenberg, *Israel and the American National Interest*, p. 10.


12. See, for example, the May 3, 1959 news release by Congressman Emanuel Celler (Celler Collection, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Subject File 504, “Israel—General, 1959–1966”): “Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East. The Administration must know that it can rely upon Israel and its army as its major bulwark in the Middle East.”


14. See also C. L. Sulzberger, “The Roots of Hell,” NYT, June 9, 1967: “Pragmatic American interests were clearly with the Arabs, who possessed vast petroleum deposits in which U.S. firms had invested fortunes.”


16. Such an orientation was possible due to a change in the strategic global situation when the growing use of ballistic missiles reduced the necessity of foreign bases and the U.S. began seeking relations based on more substantial interests.

Special Relationship Between the United States and Israel


18. In an address to the National Executive Council of the American Jewish Committee on October 28, 1973, Eugene V. Rostow argued that “the United States is supporting Israel in order to protect vital national interests of the U.S. and of its allies and friends in Europe, the Middle East and Asia.” Typescript, p. 1. For a different opinion, see former Assistant Secretary of State Parker T. Hart, “The Go-Between: A Role that the U.S. Can No Longer Play,” New Middle East, November 1972, pp. 7–10.


20. Senator Jackson’s report to the Committee on Armed Services.


24. CR, May 2, 1968, p. 11541. See also a joint statement issued by several senators, NYT, October 22, 1950.


34. Editorial “Israel’s Tenth,” NYT, April 24, 1958.


37. Drinan, Honor the Promise, pp. 235–236.


39. Drinan, Honor the Promise, p. 3.


41. WP, June 12, 1967.


43. C. L. Sulzberger, “The Roots of Hell,” NYT, June 9, 1963: “There is [a] somewhat mystical bond that stems from Puritan ideas and Bible fundamentalism and which existed long before Zionism.”


47. Senator Herbert H. Lehman’s statement before American Jewish leaders, NYT, March 8, 1953.


52. Glick, Triangular Connection, p. 126.


62. Reich, U.S. and Israel, p. 195. See also Orr, “Theological Perspectives,” p. 345: “Israel is the answer to European Jewry’s need for a haven for everyday life, but it is also an answer to Americans . . . for a haven from the secular embrace of everyday life. That is to say, what is secular nationalism in Israel is piety in America.”


65. Bookbinder’s definition of the Jewish lobby in Gardner, “Israel Lobby,” p. 1873. Although there are several other national and umbrella Jewish organizations in the United States, notably the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, that join together with AIPAC to form the major coordinating bodies in the lobbying efforts for Israel, AIPAC is the only officially registered domestic lobbying organization established for the purpose of influencing legislation regarding Israel and its security. Reich, U.S. and Israel, p. 199.


68. Ibid., p. 750.


70. Interview in Congressional Quarterly 33 (August 30, 1975).

71. Blitzer, Between Washington and Jerusalem, p. 147.

72. The term “interest group” has been defined as “any group that, on the basis of one or more shared attitudes, makes certain claims upon other groups in the society for the establishment, maintenance . . . of forms of behavior that are implied by the shared attitudes,” in David Truman, The Governmental Process (New York: Knopf, 1951), p. 33.

73. Reich, Quest for Peace, pp. 367–370.


75. “Israeli Lobby: Calling in the Congressional Votes,” in The Middle East: U.S. Policy, Israel, Oil and the Arabs Congressional Quarterly, April 1974, p. 54.


77. Ray, Future of American-Israeli Relations, p. 32; see also Glick, Triangular Connection, p. 103: “It is at best an oversimplification and at worst an untrue to claim or believe that American Jews control or determine what the American government wants and does in the Middle East.”

78. Reich, Quest for Peace, p. 372.


80. Urofsky, We Are One, p. 351.

81. Ibid., p. 359.

82. Podhoretz, “Now, Instant Zionism,” p. 42: “The feeling was and is—that if Israel were to be annihilated, the Jews of America would also disappear.”

83. Urofsky, We Are One, p. 351.

84. Cited in Blitzer, Between Washington and Jerusalem, p. 118.

85. Urofsky, We Are One, p. 351. See also Glick, Triangular Connection, p. 126: “Both Israel and the Jews of America carry . . . a shared fear of [the] repetition [of the Holocaust], and a shared
determination that they must do everything in their combined power to prevent its ever happening again."

86. NYT, October 24, 1956.
Julius Rosenwald
(1862–1932)
Surrounded by some of the YMCA buildings he helped to found
(Courtesy YMCA of the USA Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries)
In 1910, Julius Rosenwald, the Jewish mail-order magnate from Chicago, joined forces with the Young Men’s Christian Association to provide YMCA branches for African-Americans. Rosenwald offered to contribute $25,000 to every community in the United States that raised $75,000 toward the erection of an African-American YMCA. Rosenwald’s offer triggered nationwide fund-raising campaigns and resulted in the construction of twenty-four YMCA buildings.

The alliance between Rosenwald, the YMCA, and African-Americans seems rather peculiar at first glance. Why would a Jew support the establishment of Christian facilities for African-Americans? David Levering Lewis, who examined the collaboration between African-Americans and Jews during the 1910s and 1920s, has suggested that some of the wealthy Jews who aided African-Americans had ulterior motives. According to Lewis, they reasoned that their assistance to the African-American struggle for racial advancement would spare Jews “some of the necessity of directly rebutting anti-Semitic stereotypes,” for white America would perforce conclude that if “blacks could make good citizens . . . all other groups [including Jews] could make better ones.” Yet Lewis’s highly interpretive study offers no evidence to support this contention.

Julius Rosenwald certainly never said that his support of African-American causes was stimulated by a desire to refute anti-Semitic stereotypes. On the contrary, Rosenwald claimed that he was motivated by sympathy for the victims of discrimination. Having experienced the indignity of anti-Semitism, he felt compassion for those who suffered from racism.

However, Rosenwald’s YMCA activities were not only the result of compassion. The peculiar alliance between the Jew from Chicago and
African-American Christians seems to have been forged at least in part by a shared set of values. Despite anti-Semitism and racism, Rosenwald and African-Americans in the YMCA believed in the promise of the American Dream. They embraced the concept of rugged individualism as a means of achieving success. They resented charity, claiming that it undermined personal initiative and deprived the individual of a sense of pride and achievement. Thus, while Rosenwald shared neither race nor religion with African-Americans in the YMCA, he did share with them a belief in personal improvement and self-help.

Rosenwald’s conviction that the American Dream could indeed become reality was rooted in his personal experiences. Born on August 12, 1862, the second son of German Jewish immigrants, Rosenwald grew up in Springfield, Illinois, where his parents operated a small retail store. In 1879, without completing high school, he entered the clothing business as an apprentice to his uncles in New York City. Within five years he had saved enough money to open a clothing store in New York. After this successful venture Rosenwald moved to Chicago to manufacture garments, and in 1895 he bought $35,000 worth of shares in the stock of one of his customers, the Sears Roebuck Company. The following year Rosenwald became vice-president of the company and launched a brilliant advertising campaign which firmly established Sears in the mail-order business. By 1909 Rosenwald was president of Sears, and the company was recording annual sales of more than $50,000,000.5

As president of Sears, Rosenwald “accumulated a fortune, making more money than he could use.”4 This caused him much concern. Rosenwald was particularly worried about the effect of his wealth on his family. He was afraid that it would become “a millstone about the neck” of his five children.5 As a self-made man who believed that work was a “privilege,” Rosenwald feared that a large inheritance would deprive his children “of the joy of honest, conscientious labor.”6 However, he was not only concerned about the effects of his wealth on his family. He was also embarrassed about the size of his fortune. As he remarked to a friend: “I really feel ashamed to have so much money.”7

Rosenwald tried to cope with his “Burden of Wealth” by adopting Andrew Carnegie’s philosophy of civic stewardship.6 Rosenwald was
concerned that the massive urbanization, industrialization, and immigration of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had produced social conditions which were weakening America's democracy. The wealthy, Rosenwald claimed, had an obligation to use their fortunes to seek out and heal "the sore spots of civilization" in order to guarantee that America remained the land of equal opportunity. Accordingly, he argued that the "generation which has contributed to the making of a millionaire should be the one to profit by his generosity." Based on this conviction, Rosenwald supported social improvement and educational activities in Chicago and throughout the nation, and eventually gave away $63,000,000. Nearly half of this money went to African-Americans.

Rosenwald's concern for the plight of African-Americans was aroused by Dr. Paul J. Sachs, a former business partner of Goldman, Sachs and Company, who had taken an interest in the Urban League and tried to enlist Rosenwald's support. In 1910, Sachs presented Rosenwald with a biography of William H. Baldwin, Jr., founder of the Urban League, and a copy of Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery.* These two books influenced Rosenwald more than anything he had ever read.

Washington's rise from slavery to the presidency of Tuskegee Institute was a career Rosenwald admired. He and Washington were both self-made men who valued hard work and personal initiative. Moreover, they shared a belief in the civic responsibility of the "better types of citizens" for the less fortunate ones. In addition, Rosenwald was particularly impressed with Baldwin's contention that the fate of African-Americans was inseparably linked to the progress of the nation at large. As Rosenwald explained:

I am interested in the Negro people because I am also interested in the white people. Negroes are one-tenth of our population. If we promote better citizenship among the Negroes not only are they improved, but our entire citizenship is benefited.

Rosenwald's interest in African-Americans was also influenced by his Jewish heritage, which had made him sensitive to prejudice and discrimination.
Chauffeur and auto mechanics classes were popular features of the Rosenwald YMCAs—Wabash Avenue Branch, Chicago, opened in 1913

(Courtesy YMCA of the USA Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries)
I also belong to a race that suffers and has suffered for centuries. . . . You would also probably be surprised to know that there are . . . clubs in the city of Chicago, representing what you might call the best type of citizenship . . . that would not admit a Jew. 19

But despite these handicaps, Rosenwald believed that America offered Jews and African-Americans unparalleled opportunities if they behaved "properly" and displayed "proper citizenship." 20

Rosenwald's philanthropic efforts on behalf of African-Americans began with his support of the YMCA in 1910. 21 He later recalled how startled he was when first approached by a Christian raising money for missionary work in Africa.

I, a Jew, had no real interest in securing converts for Christianity. . . . However, I could not help but think why on earth do people want to spend their time and money on Africans, eight thousand miles away when we have millions of that race who are our citizens, who are anxious to learn, and I have no doubt would be glad to take advantage of any missionary work which might be available . . . and that the time and money would, to my mind, bring far greater results . . . to our own citizens, both black and white. 22

Rosenwald decided to support the YMCA because its institutions provided African-Americans with opportunities for self-help and personal improvement and not with charity. By supporting black YMCAs, he would be assisting African-Americans, for whom he felt compassion, without compromising his belief in rugged individualism. 23

In the spring of 1910, when officials of the white YMCA in Chicago asked Rosenwald for a donation to its building fund, he responded: "I won't give a cent to this $350,000 fund unless you will include in it the building of a Colored Men's Y.M.C.A." 24 Rosenwald then offered to contribute $25,000 provided that the fund include a building for Chicago's African-American population. 25 The Chicago YMCA accepted his conditions.

In December 1910, the Chicago YMCA asked Dr. Jesse E. Moorland, one of the highest-ranking black YMCA officials, to assist in conducting a fund-raising campaign for an African-American branch. 26 Moorland had joined the International Council of the YMCA in 1898 as one of two African-American secretaries responsible for the organization of African-American branches in cities. In June 1907,
Jesse E. Moorland (1863–1940) was the highest-ranking African-American YMCA official in charge of city branches

( Courtesy YMCA of the USA Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries)
Moorland had investigated the possibility of obtaining equipment and support for a black YMCA in Chicago. He had conducted a survey of Chicago’s African-American populace and found that without the backing of “some interested friends,” they would be unable to raise the necessary funds for a YMCA building. However, they would be able to support a branch and “make it self-sustaining.” Thus, he urged the construction of a black YMCA. Despite this, efforts to raise funds for this purpose did not begin until Rosenwald promised his assistance in 1910.

After Moorland’s arrival in Chicago in December of that year, Rosenwald invited him to lunch at his office. During this meeting on December 16, 1910, Rosenwald asked about YMCA work among African-Americans throughout the country. Moorland explained that the YMCA assisted local groups in forming associations and raising funds but did not give financial aid. Thus, black YMCAs were largely dependent on the support of local African-American citizens, who were often unable to raise sufficient funds by themselves. As a result black YMCAs remained ill-equipped and provided minimal services.

By 1910, some forty black YMCA groups existed in American cities. However, none owned modern buildings designed and built for YMCA use. Instead they usually functioned in rented premises, often former saloons or old buildings turned into YMCA facilities. Perhaps Rosenwald’s interest was quickened when Moorland informed him that John D. Rockefeller, Sr., had contributed $25,000 toward the construction of a black YMCA in Washington, D.C., and that George Foster Peabody had endowed an African-American branch for his hometown, Columbus, Georgia.

During the lunch Rosenwald offered to contribute $25,000 to every community in the country that raised $75,000 toward the erection of an African-American YMCA over the next five years. The only condition was that he would give the $25,000 only after $50,000 raised locally was “actually expended for land and building.”

Rosenwald’s offer reflected his acceptance of Booker T. Washington’s accommodationist philosophy. Instead of challenging the YMCA’s Jim Crow policy, Rosenwald tried to assist African-Americans to secure equal but separate facilities. This, he believed, would provide “a needy and worthy group of our citizens” with “a fair
chance" to earn the respect of whites.34 Like Washington, Rosenwald hoped to achieve his goal by fostering cooperation between "the best men of both races" as well as by racial self-help.35

Rosenwald was convinced that America's racial problems resulted from a lack of knowledge and understanding between the races. Ignorance, he believed, could only be overcome gradually as cooperation between African-Americans and whites eventually helped to reduce prejudice.36 The matching-funds offer was designed to induce the races to cooperate by requiring communities to raise two-thirds of the necessary funds locally.

Moreover, Rosenwald's conditional offer was intended to inspire African-Americans to take an active and responsible part in the fund-raising campaigns. Rosenwald, like other philanthropists, endorsed the "ideology of rugged individualism" and rejected "mere" charity.37 His philanthropy was designed to provide African-Americans with "an opportunity, not to be worked for but to be worked with."38

Moorland shared Rosenwald's belief that charity undermined personal initiative and deprived individuals of the sense of pride and achievement that could only be gained through hard work. Thus he objected to George Foster Peabody's endowment of the YMCA in Columbus, Georgia, claiming it had a "weakening and benumbing influence."39 Instead, he welcomed Rosenwald's stimulating challenge, explaining:

Very little would be accomplished by working for men or by handing them a ready-made program. This might do very well for children and feeble-minded persons but lasting and effective results could be gotten by working with people.40

Two weeks after the lunch, Rosenwald confirmed his matching-funds offer in a letter to the Chicago YMCA. On January 1, 1911, he announced it at a public meeting of African-Americans who had gathered at Chicago's Odd Fellows Hall to launch a fund-raising campaign for a black YMCA.41 In response to Rosenwald's offer, Norman W. Harris, a prominent Chicago banker, and Cyrus H. McCormick, the president of International Harvester, each contributed $25,000 to the black building fund.42 Inspired by these contributions, James H. Tilghman, a retired African-American messenger for the Chesapeake Telephone Company, donated his life's saving of
Tilghman, who had arrived in Chicago in 1881 "without friends and hardly a dollar," expressed his hope that a black YMCA would provide travelers and newcomers to the city with "a desirable place where a young man can feel homelike and happy."

After the press publicized his offer, Rosenwald received enthusiastic responses from all over the country. President William Howard Taft, for example, claimed that "nothing could be more useful to the race and to the country." The Chicago Defender, an African-American newspaper, likened Rosenwald's offer to the Emancipation Proclamation, comparing him to John Brown, Charles Summer, and Abraham Lincoln; the Southern Workman, the journal of the Hampton Institute, claimed that both "races will be blessed by [Rosenwald's offer], for, after all, humanity is a unit"; Booker T. Washington called it "one of the wisest and best-paying philanthropic investments"; and George Foster Peabody assured Rosenwald that "no future investments will prove more profitable than those made to further Negro Y.M.C.A. work."

Despite the widespread acclaim, however, Rosenwald's offer also met with criticism, due to its implicit acceptance of the YMCA's Jim Crow policy. W. E. B. Du Bois, the editor of the Crisis, for instance, praised Rosenwald's generosity but condemned the YMCA, charging that "it is an unchristian and unjust and dangerous procedure which segregates colored people in the Y.M.C.A." And he cautioned: "We may be glad of the colored Y.M.C.A. movement on the one hand, on the other hand we must never for a single moment fail to recognize the injustice which has made it an unfortunate necessity."

Similarly, the Broad Ax, another Chicago African-American newspaper, spoke favorably of Rosenwald's offer but asked:

Why not offer $25,000 to every city in the U.S. which will open its Y.M.C.A door to their brother in black? . . . We have no faith in any Y.M.C.A. which will not admit a respectable, intelligent young man of color, and we don't believe that God, in his goodness, approves of such devilish prejudice, under the guise of a Christian fraternity.

Nevertheless many African-Americans greeted Rosenwald's offer enthusiastically. They were willing to accept segregated facilities rather than forgo the practical benefits they believed a YMCA would offer. Moreover, a growing number of white Americans began to
support African-American fund-raising efforts, convinced that the YMCA's "wholesome" influence would benefit the community at large. The Kansas City Journal, for example, asked: "Would it not be effective economy to build a negro Y.M.C.A. rather than to make a larger appropriation for the police force and the maintenance of the courts and penitentiary institutions?"

The allocation of Rosenwald funds was supervised by white officials of the Chicago YMCA, while Moorland served as executive officer in the field. Moorland visited communities which considered applying for Rosenwald aid in order to survey the economic situation of African-Americans and the state of race relations. When he was convinced that a community was able to maintain a YMCA building as well as to raise sufficient funds for construction, he sent a positive recommendation to the Chicago YMCA. He then organized and supervised the local fund-raising campaign among African-Americans. For a period of ten to fourteen days, teams of local YMCA supporters collected subscriptions or pledges that were to be paid after the successful completion of the campaign.

During the five-year term of the offer, seven cities conducted successful fund-raising campaigns. Black YMCA branches were built in Washington, Chicago, Indianapolis, Philadelphia, Kansas City, Cincinnati, and St. Louis with the help of Rosenwald's $25,000 gifts. When the offer expired at the end of 1915, Rosenwald granted extensions to six other cities. Over the next five years, successful campaigns for "Rosenwald YMCAs" were conducted in Brooklyn, Baltimore, Columbus, Harlem, Atlanta, and Pittsburgh.

Rosenwald was pleased with the thirteen black YMCAs his matching-funds policy had helped to create, and in 1920 he considered renewing his offer. First, however, he asked the YMCA to survey and evaluate the progress of the existing branches. Rosenwald was particularly interested in the services rendered to African-Americans and the degree of interracial cooperation his offer had stimulated.

The YMCA asked a white official, William J. Parker, and Moorland to conduct independent studies of the Rosenwald YMCAs. After interviewing the African-American secretaries of the Rosenwald YMCAs, Moorland reported that the branches served not only their members but also the community at large. The black YMCAs had
become community centers providing a meeting place for a variety of 
African-American groups, from choirs to local chapters of the 
NAACP. Moreover, "the building movement has taught many men 
how to promote secular business enterprises in the matter of estab-
lishing banks, building apartment houses, as well as churches and, in 
some cases, schools, putting their affairs on a better financial basis." 
Though his overall appraisal of the Rosenwald YMCAs was quite 
favorable, Moorland took a dim view of the fact that the Chicago 
YMCA, alone among the thirteen branches financed by Rosenthal, 
did not have an African-American chairman.

Parker's study of the Rosenwald YMCAs was based solely on inter-
views with white YMCA officials in the thirteen cities. He found that 
the black branches had a "surprisingly larger" membership, "fairly 
competent" secretaries, and the support of "the leading colored pro-
fessional and business men." In the fields of religion, social events, 
housing, and recreation, Parker reported satisfactory progress. How-
ever, he pointed out, neither the physical nor the educational pro-
grams compared favorably with work done in white YMCAs.

In his report, Parker noted that many African-Americans had 
failed to pay the amounts they had pledged during the fund-raising 
campaigns. He explained, however, that they had "pledged in good 
faith but overestimated their ability to pay," and in addition they did 
not generally have the means to support their branches beyond the 
payment of membership fees. Thus, local white YMCAs continued to 
support the black branches financially through "appropriations from 
their general funds."

Concerning interracial cooperation, Parker stated that relations 
between white and black YMCA officials seemed "to be very intimate 
and cordial" but admitted that their contacts were "limited to official 
occasions." Regarding salaries Parker found that African-American 
secretaries were generally paid less than their white counterparts. 
Only one-third of the branches paid African-Americans the same 
salary as whites, while the remainder paid them about 25 percent less 
than whites. Despite these shortcomings, Parker urged Rosenwald 
to reopen his "original offer for a reasonable period."

Although both Moorland and Parker suggested a renewal of 
Rosenwald's offer, each proposed different conditions. Parker recom-
mended a continuation of the 1910 offer with new conditions requiring standard-sized buildings equipped with swimming pool, dormitories, cafeteria, as well as physical, recreational, and educational rooms. This reflected Parker’s desire to provide African-American communities with YMCA buildings that were equal to their white counterparts.

Moorland, on the other hand, argued that the matching-funds policy worked to the disadvantage of African-Americans who lived in the rural South, the majority of the African-American populace at that time. In the South virtually no recreational facilities for African-Americans existed, and white southerners were usually unwilling to make significant contributions to the fund-raising campaigns. Some cities, such as Nashville, Jacksonville, and New Orleans, had tried to match Rosenwald’s offer, but failed because of the lack of white support. Of the first thirteen Rosenwald YMCAs, only three—those in Atlanta, Baltimore, and Washington—were in the South, where some 90 percent of America’s black population lived. As Moorland noted:

The conditions in the South are so different to what they are in Chicago and the North, that there is no comparison. It would be almost a phenomenon if we discovered a white man in the South would give $25,000.00 to a colored building.

Moorland urged Rosenwald to support YMCAs where they were needed and not just where the local population was willing and able to finance them. He proposed an offer that would allow for smaller and less well-equipped buildings, thereby enabling poorer communities, particularly those in the South, to qualify for Rosenwald aid.

However, Moorland’s efforts to convince Rosenwald to change the conditions of his offer were unsuccessful. Rosenwald’s philanthropy was based on the ideology of self-help, and from this standpoint, those who could not raise their share were not worthy of receiving his share. Thus, Rosenwald’s renewal offer was much closer to Parker’s. On July 6, 1920, Rosenwald announced a two-year renewal of his offer, asking local communities to raise $125,000 in order to qualify for a $25,000 donation. There were several conditions. Branches built with Rosenwald’s support would have to include the following features: 

(1) separate quarters for men and boys; (2) standard Gymnasi-
The increase in the required matching funds and the high cost of building materials following World War I made the new offer futile. In the next two years no American city was able to raise sufficient funds. However, Rosenwald granted extensions to eleven cities.

Between 1924 and 1933 eleven more black YMCA branches were built in northern and western cities: Denver, Detroit, Los Angeles, Buffalo, Dayton, Montclair, New Jersey, Toledo, Dallas, Youngstown, Orange, New Jersey, and Harrisburg.

Rosenwald's conditional gifts resulted in the first major effort of the YMCA to provide adequate facilities for urban African-Americans. The twenty-four buildings erected between 1912 and 1933 were equipped with swimming pools, gymnasiums, cafeterias, reading and class rooms, employment bureaus, and dormitories. They provided facilities previously all but unknown to African-Americans. The pools and gymnasiums offered recreation and exercise for YMCA members as well as for African-American students from area schools. The YMCA's educational program included a variety of classes, such as elementary English, typing, architectural drawing, stenography, auto mechanics, and driving lessons, enhancing the vocational qualifications of members. For a long time the dormitories of the Rosenwald YMCAs were practically the only places where African-American male travelers could find comfortable and safe sleeping accommodations outside the homes of relatives and friends. By 1933 the Rosenwald YMCAs had an aggregate membership of almost 20,000 and the buildings were utilized by many thousands of other African-Americans. The location of the YMCAs in or near the African-American business districts enhanced their importance for the African-American community.

Thus, the Rosenwald YMCAs improved the quality of life for many urban African-American males. By providing recreational and educational programs as well as accommodations, the YMCA offered African-American men and boys an alternative to the city streets. The mother of a member of the Washington branch expressed what many parents must have felt: "Before this building was opened I did not
know where my boy was. Now I rest content, knowing that his leisure time is being properly directed."74

In addition to providing them with improved leisure-time activities, Rosenwald's philanthropy also stimulated African-Americans to actively participate in the planning and fund-raising efforts. Although Rosenwald and other whites contributed 86 percent of the funds, African-Americans gave substantial amounts of money considering their economic situation.75 According to the Southern Workman, the fund-raising campaign "called up latent energies which were heretofore undreamed of. It established self-confidence among the colored people, who worked earnestly to do their share in securing funds for the big Y.M.C.A. building campaign."76

At the dedication of Chicago's Wabash Avenue branch, Rosenwald acknowledged and praised the involvement and support of African-Americans.

You now have an enterprise in which you have participated from the start, for you conducted a campaign for raising money to build it. . . . You are organizing the force to operate the plant. You are going to run it, too, what a chance for you to make good! What a grand opportunity to grow strong! What an efficient help to dissipate prejudice!77

Rosenwald's philanthropy was less successful in stimulating interracial cooperation. Blacks and whites cooperated for the duration of the fund-raising campaigns, but once the buildings were completed, interracial cooperation usually came to an end. Nevertheless, most of the cities reported that the joint efforts had contributed to better understanding between the races.

Despite the continued absence of the interracial cooperation that he hoped to engender, Rosenwald's philanthropy did establish twenty-four black institutions, largely in the northern and western cities to which subsequent generations of African-Americans would migrate.78 While some African-Americans remained critical of Rosenwald's philanthropy for its role in perpetuating segregation, members of the YMCAs built with his support established an annual memorial day in his honor.79 When Rosenwald died on January 6, 1932, Channing H. Tobias, the highest-ranking black YMCA official, called him "one of the greatest friends of the Negro race since Abraham Lincoln."80
Rosenwald’s support of black YMCAs was clearly stimulated by genuine concern for the plight of African-Americans. As a Jew Rosenwald, in common with African-Americans, knew prejudice and discrimination at first-hand. However, compassion was not his only motivation. Rosenwald’s philanthropy was also based on a firm belief in the American Dream, a belief he shared with African-Americans in the YMCA. He and they were convinced that America provided them with the opportunity to succeed. Jim Crow and anti-Semitism, while regrettable, were not overwhelming obstacles to success, but "a grand opportunity to grow strong!" Thus, the "peculiar alliance" between the Chicago Jew and black Christians was not peculiar at all. It was rooted in the late nineteenth century’s self-help ideology and Horatio Alger myth.

Regardless of Rosenwald’s motives, African-Americans benefitted from his philanthropy. Excluded from white YMCAs and with no hope for integration, support from Rosenwald provided them with the best available facilities. Moreover, with Rosenwald’s help African-Americans acquired institutions over which they, and not whites, exercised control. More useful, perhaps, than an endless debate about motivation are some observations about the significance of the black YMCAs by the greatest African-American leader of the time, W. E. B. Du Bois. In 1925 he wrote:

Today there is gradually rising . . . an independent autonomous colored Y.M.C.A.—national, even international in scope—whose connection with the white Y.M.C.A. is daily growing less and less, confined more and more to general policies and the rare personal contacts of a few officials. 

Whatever his motives or philanthropic peculiarities, Julius Rosenwald helped to create a network of black YMCAs which served African-Americans in their search for cultural self-determination.

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Location of Rosenwald YMCAs

1910 Offer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Date Opened</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>12th Street</td>
<td>1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>Wabash Avenue</td>
<td>1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indianapolis</td>
<td>Senate Avenue</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>Christian Street</td>
<td>1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas City, Mo.</td>
<td>Paseo Department</td>
<td>1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>9th Street</td>
<td>1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>Carlton Avenue</td>
<td>1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>Druid Hill Avenue</td>
<td>1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>Pine Street</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>Spring Street</td>
<td>1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>135th Street</td>
<td>1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>Butler Street</td>
<td>1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>Centre Avenue</td>
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1920 Offer

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<tr>
<td>Denver</td>
<td>Glenarm Branch</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>St. Antoine</td>
<td>1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>28th Street</td>
<td>1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>Michigan Avenue</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayton</td>
<td>5th Street</td>
<td>1928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montclair, N.J.</td>
<td>Washington Street</td>
<td>1928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>Indiana Avenue</td>
<td>1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>Moorland</td>
<td>1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngstown</td>
<td>West Federal Street</td>
<td>1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange, N.J.</td>
<td>Oakwood Avenue</td>
<td>1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrisburg</td>
<td>Forster Street</td>
<td>1933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Rethinking the American Jewish Experience

Notes

Research for this article was made possible through a New Faculty Research Grant from Ball State University, an Albert J. Beveridge Grant from the American Historical Association, a Summer Research Fellowship from the University of Cincinnati, and a Research Grant from the Rockefeller Archive Center.

1. For a list of their locations, see the appendix.


5. Julius Rosenwald, "Burden of Wealth," *Saturday Evening Post*, January 5, 1929, p. 136; Embree and Waxman, *Investment in People*, p. 13. In accordance with his philosophy, Rosenwald made no bequests to his grandchildren, arguing that it "is the duty of every man to provide for his family. . . . As I have provided for my children, I expect them to provide for theirs. If they don’t, their children must suffer the consequences—or perhaps the benefits—of their parent’s neglect." Quoted in Angell, "Julius Rosenwald," pp. 144-145. At the time of his death, Rosenwald’s estate was valued at $17,000,000, less than the total of his philanthropic contributions. Bachmann, "Julius Rosenwald," p. 99.


17. Ibid., pp. 605–606.

18. Ibid., p. 606.


23. Julius Rosenwald to Chicago YMCA, December 30, 1910 (JR Papers, reel 85); "To Give the City Negro a Fair Chance," Association Men, February 1911, p. 199.


27. L. Wilbur Messer to Jesse E. Moorland, June 11, 1907 (Records Relating to YMCA Work with Blacks, 1891–1979, box 6, # Colored Work Department—Local, State and Area Relationships, AK, 1910–1945, YMCA Archives).


29. Werner, Julius Rosenwald, p. 119; “Memorandum of Conversation between Julius Rosenwald, A. H. Loeb, L. Wilbur Messer, William J. Parker and Jesse B. Moorland” (Biographical Records, Julius Rosenwald, # 2, YMCA Archives).

30. For a discussion of the struggle of black YMCAs trying to obtain buildings, see Mjagkij, “History of the Black YMCA,” pp. 82–146.


36. Julius Rosenwald to Walter Wood, General Secretary, Philadelphia YMCA, October 29, 1913 (JR Papers, reel 85); Julius Rosenwald to Thomas E. Taylor, Secretary, Senate Avenue Branch, Indianapolis YMCA, June 30, 1913 (JR Papers, reel 84).


41. Julius Rosenwald to Chicago YMCA, December 30, 1910 (JR Papers, reel 85); Chicago YMCA, *Fifty-Five Years*, p. 86. A group of African-Americans under the leadership of Ferdinand Barnett held a first fund-raising meeting in December 1910; Spear, *Black Chicago*, p. 100.


45. "Y.M.C.A. Colored, Jan. 1911, Letters from friends about the offer" (JR Papers, reel 85); William Howard Taft to Julius Rosenwald, January 27, 1911 (JR Papers, reel 86); William Howard Taft to L. Wilbur Hesser, January 9, 1911, reprinted in *Chicago Defender*, January 21, 1911, p. 2.


48. Ibid.


50. While many African-American communities tried to match Rosenwald’s offer, some African-Americans in Boston, Cleveland, and Detroit opposed the construction of black YMCAs as "a form of offensive segregation." African-Americans in Boston never applied for Rosenwald funds, whereas in Detroit and Cleveland opposition to Rosenwald YMCAs decreased throughout the following decade. In 1925 Detroit opened a black YMCA with Rosenwald’s support, and the following year Cleveland applied for matching funds. However, Cleveland’s African-American populace was unable to raise the necessary funds. This was the result of continued opposition to a segregated YMCA branch as well as the simultaneous fund-raising activities of the Phyllis Wheatley Association; William C. Graves to Rosenwald, April 19, 1920 (JR Papers, reel 84). For correspondence regarding the Cleveland and Detroit fund-raising campaign, see JR Papers, reel 84.


52. Moorland’s salary was paid in part through the building campaigns. He received 1 percent of the funds raised during the campaign, plus traveling and local entertainment expenses. Richard C. Morse, “Statement,” December 10, 1913 (Records Relating to YMCA Work With Blacks, 1891-1979, box 1, # Policy—Correspondence and Statements, 1913-1941, YMCA Archives).


54. See appendix. St. Louis conducted a successful campaign before the expiration of Rosenwald’s 1910 offer, but the building was not completed until 1919.

55. See appendix.


58. William C. Graves to Julius Rosenwald, May 2, 1920 (JR Papers, reel 86).

59. Ibid.

60. William J. Parker to Julius Rosenwald, March 15, 1920 (JR Papers, reel 85).


64. For correspondence concerning Jacksonville, Florida, see JR Papers, reel 84; and for Nashville and New Orleans, JR Papers, reel 85.


67. Julius Rosenwald to Chicago YMCA, July 6, 1920 (JR Papers, reel 85).


69. The Emerson Street branch in Evanston, Illinois, is frequently listed as a Rosenwald YMCA, although it was not subjected to the conditions of the second offer. Rosenwald's donations, totaling $12,000, were personal contributions designed to help liquidate the debt of the branch. For correspondence concerning the black YMCA in Evanston, see JR Papers, reel 84.

70. See appendix.

71. Werner, Julius Rosenwald, p. 120.


73. Arthur, Life on the Negro Frontier, p. 96, gives a membership of 19,296 for the year 1933.


75. African-Americans contributed 14 percent, local whites 48 percent, and Rosenwald 21 percent to the black branches. The remainder of the funds came from other sources outside the communities. William C. Graves to Julius Rosenwald, March 20, 1920 (JR Papers, reel 85).


77. "Dedication Chicago Y.M.C.A. for Colored Men, 6/15/13. (J.R.)."

78. See appendix.


80. Channing H. Tobias, "Address Delivered in Honor of the Memory of Julius Rosenwald over Station WEAF of New York and Broadcast over the NBS Network during the 'Southland Sketches' Hour," February 7, 1932 (JEM Papers, box 126-41, #871).

81. "Dedication Chicago Y.M.C.A. for Colored Men, 6/15/13. (J.R.)."

Reverend Samuel M. Isaacs
(1804-1878)
Dutch blood runs thick in the veins of American Jewry. The first Jews to settle in New Amsterdam in the 1650s were from the Netherlands, and a continuing trickle of Dutch Jews followed in the next centuries. During the great period of European migration, 1800-1915, an estimated 10,000 Dutch Jews immigrated to the United States. Most came from the Jewish Quarter of Amsterdam, which was the largest in all of Europe, and they settled in New York City, where half of all the Dutch Jews in America lived in 1880.

Just as the Dutch comprised a minor part of the European emigration to America, so Jews made up a small portion of the Dutch emigration. But Dutch Jews were far more likely to emigrate than other Netherlanders. They were a highly mobile, urban people who began emigrating to England and America during the Napoleonic conquest (1795-1813) four decades before the migrations of Orthodox Protestant groups in 1846-1847.

One of the early emigrants was Meyer Samuel Isaacs, a prominent merchant-banker in Leeuwarden, who suffered great financial reverses during the Napoleonic wars because of international trade restrictions and the British naval blockade. The Napoleonic wars, which pitted England against French expansionism, and especially the British Orders-in-Council of 1805, which effectively blockaded the European continent, severely hurt international merchants like the Dutch Jews, who traded largely with London. Meyer Isaacs fell into debt after 1805, and by 1810 he had borrowed 6,300 English pounds from family and friends. After Napoleon formally annexed the Netherlands in 1810 and sent in French occupation forces, Meyer Isaacs and other merchants, already financially strapped and increasingly fearful of the loss of their historic liberties and property, fled to England, leaving behind their property and debts. The Isaacs family
departed in 1814 and settled in Spitalfields, a district of East London that was a Dutch Jewish center.

The Isaacs family were devout Jews, members of the Leeuwarden Synagogue, whose 600 seats made it the largest in the Netherlands outside of the main centers in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague. Meyer Isaacs entered the rabbinate in London, and four of his five sons also became rabbis, including Samuel, who was ten years old when the family moved to London, young enough to learn to speak English without a Dutch accent. This ability later earned him many speaking engagements in America, where sermons and public addresses in English were much preferred to the customary Yiddish or German tongue.

Samuel attended public school, but as an Orthodox Jewish teenager he also studied Hebrew, the Talmud, and Jewish history in the synagogue school and under the tutelage of his father. After completing his education Samuel taught Hebrew for a time at the Jewish Orphanage of London and then in the 1830s became principal of a Jewish day school. This position enabled the young man to become well-connected in the wider Jewish community. He developed a lifelong friendship with the famed Anglo-Jewish banker Sir Moses Montefiore, who shared his devotion to Palestine. He also became acquainted with Solomon Hirschell, the chief rabbi of the Great Synagogue of London, and the leading rabbi in the entire British Empire.

The year 1839 marked a major turning point for the thirty-five-year-old Hebrew educator. He was married in the Great Synagogue by Rabbi Hirschell himself, and shortly before this he had decided to emigrate to America with his bride, in response to a call from the newly founded Ashkenazi (Germanic) congregation Bnai Jeshurun ("Sons of Israel") of New York to be its first preacher and cantor. The congregation, an offshoot of Shearith Israel, was at this time located in the midtown area on Elm Street. The synagogue trustees had offered Isaacs the position without an interview but only after a "scrutinizing vigilance" of his credentials and upon the recommendation of Solomon Cohen, a trusted intermediary in London. Undoubtedly, Isaacs's unique ability to preach in perfect English was a major factor in his appointment. A few days after his wedding, Isaacs and his new wife, Jane Symmons of London, took their "honeymoon" trip
to New York aboard the brig *Emery*, arriving on September 10, 1839, after a lengthy two-month voyage on stormy seas.

The title given Isaacs at Bnai Jeshurun was chazzan, which signified that he was the chief religious leader, acting as reader (cantor) at the services and conducting weddings and funerals. As chazzan he was recognized by the Gentile community as the "minister" of the congregation. In addition to his other duties, Isaacs also preached on special holidays and every Sabbath service before the New Moon. Regular preaching in the vernacular language, following the model of Protestant ministers, was just entering the synagogue at this time. Isaacs had likely learned the innovative practice of weekly vernacular preaching (as compared with the traditional formal preaching on only two Sabbaths per year) from the London Synagogue, which began English-language preaching in 1817.

Reverend Samuel Myer Isaacs ministered at the Elm Street Synagogue for five years, until a schism in 1844 rent the congregation due to ethnic rivalries. He and at least twelve other Dutch Jewish families, together with a number of English families, withdrew from the increasingly German synagogue, and formed a new congregation, Shaaray Tefila ("Gates of Prayer"). Such splintering over Old World nationality differences was endemic in America among both Jews and Christians. By 1860 New York had twenty-seven synagogues, and each nationality or subregional group worshipped according to its customary ritual.

Isaacs served Shaaray Tefila for thirty-three years, and his tenure marked the high point of Orthodoxy in New York Judaism. In 1847, when the congregation dedicated its new Wooster Street Synagogue (at 110–112 Wooster Street, between Spring and Prince Streets), Isaacs's friend Rabbi Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia gave the major address. Leeser was the acknowledged leader of American Orthodox Judaism, and Isaacs was his associate and collaborator. Isaacs devoted his pulpit to the defense of pure religion undefiled, calling the faithful to observe the full Mosaic law, the Levitical dietary rules and purification rites, and especially to keep the Sabbath. Honoring the Sabbath was difficult for Jewish retail merchants because Saturday was the major American shopping day, and state and local Sunday-
The Wooster Street Synagogue

The Forty-Fourth Street Synagogue
closing laws often kept Jewish businesses closed on that day as well, until they won legal exemptions. In addition, as a second theme, Isaacs sought to uphold Orthodoxy against the new Reform Judaism that German Jews were bringing to America in the 1840s. Among other worship practices, Reform introduced mixed choirs and instrumental music, integrated seating, prayers in English, abolition of head coverings and calling men up to the Torah, and confirmation for young women as well as young men. Reform congregations also were lax in enforcing religious discipline.

Isaacs challenged these new ideas “from the fertile fields of Germany, where everything grows fast, although not always wholesome.” What is at issue, he warned, is that Jews are “assimilating our system to that of Christianity. . . . Shame on those Rabbis who have A.D. in their thoughts.” In 1840, within a year of his arrival, Isaacs led a movement to exclude nonobservant Jews from membership in Bnai Jeshurun. But the majority favored benign tolerance, and Isaacs could only wield his pen. He lamented:

In the days of yore, violators were . . . publicly stoned to death, . . . but now . . . we court their society, give them the first honors in the Synagogue, [and] call them up to hear that law recited which anathematizes the Sabbath-violator. . . . We behold the hands of sacrilege destroying the ten commandments.

There is no place for a doctrine of “the minimum God, the maximum man,” he thundered. Such strong sentiments led historian Hyman Grinstein to declare that Isaacs was “without doubt the most ardent exponent of Sabbath observance in New York City prior to the Civil War.”

In 1833 Isaacs carefully constructed a ritual pool (mikveh), and he regularly admonished the women of his congregation for not washing in it. He even attributed the recent deaths of several young married women in the congregation to God’s anger at their direct disregard of the law of purity.

Isaacs’s goal was to safeguard the rank and file of American Jewry from Reform.

My object is . . . to prove, from facts, that our system of worship, apart from its temporalities, is the best of all systems; and to adduce evidence that adding or diminishing, abrogating, or altering our form of prayers, handed down to us
from the Men of the Great Synod, . . . at the will or caprice of men, who, howev-
er well-intentioned, are yet tinctured with the spirit of the age and are not capa-
ble of judging correctly or dispassionately—that reforms so instituted—will
lead to inevitable ruin in our polity, and tend to unfetter the chain by which we
have ever been riveted in union and in love.13

Clarion calls such as this put Isaacs at the forefront of the defense of
Orthodoxy in New York and throughout the country.

Shaaray Tefila prospered under Isaacs. The liturgy, ritual, and phys-
ical arrangement of seating all conformed to the requirements of
Orthodoxy. But the worship services were tempered by such "Protes-
tantizing" practices as regular vernacular preaching from English-lan-
guage Jewish Bibles. Also, Isaacs’s expanded role as minister of the
congregation was more akin to that of an Episcopal priest than a tradi-
tional cantor. The appreciative congregation increased their rabbi’s
salary regularly from $1,200 in 1845 to $3,500 by the end of his tenure
in the 1870s. The congregation also showed their high regard for his
services by buying a $5,000 insurance policy on the life of their leader.
In 1851, when Shaaray Tefila gave their “worthy minister” permission
to return to England for a three-month visit, his student, Aaron S.
Solomon, also a Hollander, served as reader for the congregation.14

In the 1860s, the Uptown movement of Jews directly affected the
synagogue. Orthodox Jews who lived Uptown would not ride on the
Sabbath, so they transferred to nearby synagogues. In the face of
decreasing membership and a growing indebtedness, Shaaray Tefila
was forced to relocate Uptown. In 1863 and 1864 the congregation
discussed a proposed merger with the mother synagogue, Bnai Jeshu-
run, which also planned to move Uptown, but in the end Shaaray
Tefila decided to build on its own. The spirit of rivalry was too great
to overcome.15 Shaaray Tefila sold its Wooster Street Synagogue in
1864, and after worshipping for five years in a rented building on
Broadway at 36th Street, in 1869 the congregation dedicated a newly
built $150,000 synagogue on 44th Street at Sixth Avenue, about two
miles to the north, where they worshipped until 1894.16 Barnett L.
Solomon, another Hollander, was president of Shaaray Tefila during
this relocation. Because of the "flourishing condition" of the congre-
gation, the chazzan’s workload was so heavy that the trustees in 1865
hired an assistant "to conduct the service according to the ancient
liturgy with the accepted tunes, leaving the duties of Preacher more especially to the veteran of the New York pulpit. 7

In 1857 Samuel Isaacs carried the fight against Reform to the wider Jewish community by launching a weekly periodical, the Jewish Messenger, which he made an effective organ for Orthodoxy. He wrote ringing editorials against Reform and enlisted others, including his eldest son, Myer S. Isaacs, to contribute essays, stories, and poems that nurtured Orthodoxy. 8 The Messenger also promoted Jewish charities, day schools, orphan asylums, and the creation of a national board to present a united front for American Jewry.

A few years before his death, Isaacs took yet another bold step to save historic Judaism. To stem the growing secularization among the young, he agreed somewhat reluctantly to support a radical plan proposed by another Orthodox rabbi to prepare a liberalized and simplified Ashkenazic worship rite (minhag) acceptable to all American synagogues. The time for nationality synagogues with distinctive rites had passed, Isaacs believed.

Portuguese and German, Polish and Hollander, in connection with the manner of worshipping Israel's God, are names that should, long ere this, have been erased from our nomenclature. . . . The badge we all should have proudly worn is that of "American Jews" . . . signifying that the circumstances which had given origin to marked differences in ritual had ceased to exist, and that the necessity for reconstructing another, perfectly uniform, and more comfortable to our changed condition, had arrived. 9

In 1875 Isaacs published the revolutionary proposal and warmly endorsed it in his Jewish Messenger, but the plan was stillborn, even though it stimulated widespread debate. It pleased neither the ardent Orthodox nor the Reform movement. And Isaacs's declining health and approaching retirement made it impossible for him to carry on the crusade. Apart from a universal worship rite, he opposed any change in law or custom that deviated from the traditional ritual of worship, and he especially opposed any plans to remove Hebrew from the prayer book. Judaism, he insisted, was a religion based on traditional law that could only change slowly with the authority of generations, and it must keep its link to the ancient land of Israel. 10

In addition to his ministerial and journalistic work, Isaacs promoted the customary Jewish tenets of charity, Palestinian relief, and reli-
igious education. His motto was, "Not to touch the worship, but to improve the worshippers." A colleague aptly characterized him as a "humble Jew to whom the needy turned with confiding looks; with affection." His early editorials in the *Messenger* advocated the founding of Hebrew orphanages by harping on the disgraceful case of a Jewish orphan placed in a Christian institution and converted there, all because no Jewish asylum existed. The Hebrew Benevolent Society of New York was smitten by this charge and established the Hebrew Orphan Asylum in 1859. Subsequently, Isaacs worked assiduously to combine all the Jewish charities in the city by organizing the United Hebrew Charities in 1873. He also helped to establish Mount Sinai Hospital (1852) and served as its first vice-president.21

Internationally, Isaacs crusaded for Palestinian relief, and as early as 1849 he began long-term fund-raising efforts. In 1853 he became treasurer of the North American Relief Society for Indigent Jews in Palestine, a position he held for many years. When news came of a massive famine in Palestine in 1853–1854, Isaacs was the "first to take action; the other ministers followed his lead." He mounted the first national campaign in the United States for the relief of Jews overseas. Isaacs's exceptional efforts earned him the accolade of "champion of charitable institutions."22

Isaacs also promoted Jewish education, decrying the fact that Jewish children were taught by Gentile teachers in the public schools. In 1842 he converted his congregation's afternoon school into an all-day English and Hebrew school named the New York Talmud Torah and Hebrew Institute, with the Dutch-born Henry Goldsmith as teacher of Hebrew. Although the school began strongly with eighty boys and was one of only three in the entire country, it failed within five years because of financial difficulties. Isaacs was not easily discouraged. A few years later he opened a Hebrew high school and taught Hebrew there himself. In 1852 his congregation again founded a day school, the Bnai Jeshurun Educational Institute, which boasted an enrollment of 177 pupils within a year; but it too had to close after three years (1855) because of insufficient students. The Hebrew free school movement was hampered because New York's state legislature had secularized the public schools, eliminating Protestant textbooks and allowing local school boards to choose daily Scripture readings. In
American Jewish Personalities

Jewish neighborhoods only Old Testament passages were read. Jewish children began flooding to the public schools thereafter, and all Jewish schools had closed by 1860. Nevertheless, in 1865 Isaacs finally succeeded in establishing the Hebrew Free School in New York, which flourished for many decades.33

The Dutch rabbi particularly decried the lack of Hebrew seminar-ies and colleges to provide educated leaders. “Synagogues are crying aloud for ministers, he said, “and there are none to respond to the call. Jewish children are hungering for religious food . . . and there is none to supply the desideratum; and this in free and happy America! Where are our collegiate establishments? Where our theologian insti-tutes?” In 1867 Isaacs achieved his goal by helping to establish Maimonides College in Philadelphia, the first theological seminary for Jews in the United States. Unfortunately, the college failed after a few years through no fault of Isaacs.34

Besides his religious activities, Isaacs also involved himself in “political” issues, especially efforts to defend Jews worldwide against anti-Semitic outbursts and to unify Judaism in America. Only a year after his own immigration, the famous Damascus Affair of 1840 pro-vided the first opportunity. This international crusade, which aimed to rescue a number of Jews imprisoned in Syria, is sometimes consid-ered the beginning of modern Jewish history because it aroused a latent national consciousness and identity. Isaacs and Henry Hart, another Hollander at Bnai Jeshurun, served on a seven-member com-mittee of correspondence to coordinate a petition drive calling on the American government to intervene. Out of this effort, Isaacs joined with Rabbi Isaac Leeser, the conservative leader of Philadelphia, to help unify American Jewry. In 1849 and 1850 Isaacs sent out numer-ous appeals for an all-Jewish convention or synod to promote the “welfare of Israel” by developing a uniform synagogue government and by establishing Hebrew seminaries and colleges to provide edu-cated leaders for the future. Reform leaders refused to cooperate and the unity movement failed.

At the outset of the Civil War Isaacs made yet another attempt to restore law and order to the disjointed and religiously confused Jewish community. He proposed, in the pages of the Jewish Messenger, that the learned and esteemed Orthodox Rabbi Abraham Rice of
Philadelphia be elected chief rabbi of the United States, since Ameri-
can Judaism was a body without a head to guide it. The proposal met
with a storm of criticism from independent-minded Jewish leaders,
and Isaacs was forced to abandon the plan.25

Isaacs also joined the Jewish protest chorus against the papacy in
the famous Mortara affair of 1858–1859, which involved the supposed
“child stealing” and baptism of a Jewish child by Italian Catholics.
Isaacs chaired a combined committee of all twelve synagogues in
New York City, which sponsored a mass meeting of 2,000 persons,
both Jews and Protestants, to petition President Buchanan to inter-
vene with the Vatican. When this effort proved unsuccessful, because
American Jewry was too disorganized, Isaacs in 1859 led in the
founding in New York of the Board of Delegates of American
Israelites. This body expanded into a national organization of Ortho-
dox congregations that safeguarded Jewish civil and religious rights
at home and abroad.26

His public activities and unusual facility in the English language
gave Isaacs a high visibility. Jews and non-Jews alike held him in
great esteem, and Protestant intellectuals and clerics particularly
respected him. In 1845 several professors at Yale College and the
mayor of New Haven invited him to lecture on the topic: “On the
Present Condition and Future Spiritual and Temporal Hopes of
Jews.” When Shaaray Tefila dedicated its new Wooster Street Syna-
gogue in 1847, many Protestant clergymen attended and several
addressed the congregation.27

In the 1850s, Isaacs endeared himself to the Northern public by
using the pages of the Jewish Messenger to advocate the antislavery
movement, even at the expense of losing Southern readers. “We want
subscribers,” he editorialized, “for without them we cannot publish a
paper, and Judaism needs an organ; but we want much more truth
and loyalty.” Isaacs was well acquainted with prominent antislavery
leaders, such as Professor Calvin E. Stowe, husband of Harriet Beech-
er Stowe and a prominent philo-Semite, and in 1856 Isaacs cam-
paigned for the antislavery candidate John C. Fremont. But Isaacs
refrained from preaching antislavery sermons, not wanting to bring
“politics into the pulpit.” During the Civil War, he strongly defended
the Union cause “with or without slavery,” and after President Lin-
coln's assassination he was one of two ministers selected to give prayers at the public memorial services in Union Square.  

Although never formally ordained, Isaacs was one of the leading Jewish ministers in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. One of his colleagues called him the “Father of the American Clergy.” His funeral service at Temple Shaaray Tefila in 1878 was the largest Jewish funeral of the century. Every synagogue and Jewish organization in the country sent representatives. Isaacs was a religious leader of major influence, a renowned journalist, and a mover and shaker in Jewish affairs. He was the first Jewish cleric to preach regularly in English in Ashkenazic synagogues, and for this reason he was much in demand as a guest speaker. Throughout his long career he was the featured speaker at some forty-seven synagogue dedication ceremonies across the country.

But Isaacs was most honored for his defense of Orthodoxy. Colleagues eulogized him as “a faithful proponent” of Judaism who “lamented the increasing defection amidst our ranks; the prevailing disloyalty to the sinaitic covenant.” An eminent Christian clergyman, in a glowing tribute sent to Isaacs’s sons, described their father as “a bulwark of strength against the infidelity and godlessness that are growing upon us in this great city. His firm devotion to God’s holy word brought him into direct and cordial sympathy with us Christians. . . . May his mantle rest on his children. Your father’s death is a public calamity. Who shall fill his place? Our city could better spare millions of its money than one such resolute watchman and soldier in its moral defense.”

Ironically, within two years of Isaacs’s death, Congregation Shaaray Tefila began going over to Reform, led by the new minister, who not surprisingly described his predecessor as “rigidly, obstinately orthodox.” The conservative Dutch contingent resigned in the face of this revolution, along with their English and Polish compatriots. Most of the German Jews, who tended toward Reform, remained. Thus, the end of Dutch leadership marked a crucial turning point in the history of the Shaaray Tefila congregation. More broadly it signaled the waning influence in American Jewish life of the traditional British-Dutch-Polish amalgam, which had succumbed to the overwhelming numbers of German immigrants.
Reverend Samuel Isaacs, like his Dutch Calvinist counterparts in the Midwest, was a fiery champion of the old ways in religion. He was largely responsible for shaping unorganized New York Jewry into a coherent, articulate, and respectable community. As the first English preacher in Ashkenazic congregations, Isaacs used the pulpit to preserve historic Judaism through strict religious observance, Hebrew education, and community self-help organizations. In the early years he was second only to Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia as the most influential Orthodox rabbi in America. This son of Friesland, whose family fled the oppression of Napoleon, cut a wide swath in American Judaism. He placed pulpit, pen, and podium in the service of Orthodoxy and valiantly fought against the forces of secularism and liberalism that were rotting the roots of the Jewish faith in the rising age of unbelief.

Notes


2. The Netherlands ranked tenth among European nations in overseas emigration and seventeenth in the United States among nationality groups. Of an estimated 86,000 Dutch immigrants to the United States between 1800 and 1880, Jews numbered about 6,500, or 7.5 percent. For the period 1880-1920, Dutch immigration totaled 165,000 and Jews comprised 3,500, or 2 percent. Their overall proportion of the Dutch emigration was 4 percent, or twice their percentage of the Dutch population.


15. The spirit of the rivalry is clearly evident in the very frank personal diary entries of 1863 by the young Myer S. Isaacs, eldest son of Rabbi Isaacs, who accuses the "Greene Street people" of "mischief," "contemptible conduct," and playing a "trick" because of their plan to relocate to the same vicinity on 34th Street where Shaaray Tefila planned to move, and for supposedly blocking attempts by Shaaray Tefila to purchase lots on that street. See "Myer S. Isaacs Diary, 1863 and 1868, New York, N.Y." (typescript copy, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati), vol. I, 1863, pp. 5+1, 66, 68, 76.
16. The 44th Street Synagogue occupied four building lots covering over 10,000 square feet, with an alley on each side. The architectural style was Byzantine, and the building had seating for 400 on the main floor and 320 in the galleries. Occident 26 (1868): 93.
17. Ibid.; Cohen, Shaaray Tefila, pp. 18-26. In 1850 Samuel Myer Isaacs and his wife Jane lived with their four children at 669 Houston Street between De Paw Place (Thompson Street) and Laurens Street in Ward 15. By 1860 the family, then with five children, had moved into a bigger house at 649 Houston, and by 1870 they had moved to the fashionable district of Uptown, living at 145 West 46th Street near Broadway. In 1869 the Shaaray Tefila congregation also had moved Uptown to the 44th Street Synagogue at Sixth Avenue (Ward 22). In the 1870 census, Samuel reported the value of his home as $30,000. Simon, "Samuel Myer Isaacs," pp. 7-9; Swierenga, Dutch Households in U.S. Population Censuses, 1850, 1860, 1870: An Alphabetical Listing by Family Heads, 3 vols. (Wilmington, DE, 1987), 1:484-485; Cohen, Shaaray Tefila, pp. 22-25; Goldstein, Century of Judaism in New York, pp. 63-96.


“When I came here I was thirteen and a half. . . . At fifteen I took almost three hundred people [out] on strike. . . . I got married at eighteen. . . . Then the babies came,” Mollie Linker, a 1913 immigrant to America, succinctly told an interviewer, summarizing in a few brief sentences an experience that was at once uniquely hers and shared by thousands of others. Mollie Linker’s experience epitomized that of the so-called “daughters of the shtetl,” the hundreds of thousands of young, single Jewish women who emigrated to America between 1880 and the outbreak of World War I, and whose collective portrait lies at the heart of Susan Glenn’s Daughters of the Shtetl. Enthusiastic, malleable, and determined, these East European women successfully negotiated the transition between the Old World and the New, and in the process laid the basis for much of American Jewish vernacular culture. Both at work and at home, in the garment factory and the tenement, these women fashioned a “Jewish version of the New Womanhood,” cultivating a uniquely Jewish voice and a “Jewish women’s emerging sense of self.”

Daughters of the Shtetl opens with a familiar, almost standard treatment of East European Jewish women in the Old World context before moving on to an exciting discussion of the differences in working conditions and employment prospects between married and single women in New York of the pre–World War I era. In what is perhaps the book’s most salient contribution, and among its most interesting findings, Glenn demonstrates that married women, especially those with children, purposefully restricted their working opportunities to the domestic sphere, while their single daughters, at times willingly and at other moments under duress, went off to work. Where an increasing number of married immigrant women either worked in the “family business,” tending to the needs of retail customers, or took in boarders
at home, their daughters sought employment outside, in the larger industrial environment of the rag trade. "Unlike their mothers, daughters saw their economic role expand in the United States. As immigrants deemphasized the labor of Jewish wives, they foisted greater responsibility upon the shoulders of Jewish daughters," Glenn explains. In rendering these and other distinctions, she underscores the critical relationship between work, gender, and marital status.

It is not, however, the prospect of marriage but that of employment that gives this volume its focus. Of all the encounters single women faced, it was work, Glenn maintains, that was the most central. "Many probably knew the garment workroom more immediately than any other aspect of their new American environment," she writes, adding that "the sweatshop was America." Moving from the tenement to the workplace, the author provides a detailed portrait of working conditions in the sweatshop and then, with the expansion of the garment industry, in the factory as well; her descriptions of the impact of speed and technology, a "work regime that emphasized quantity over artistry," on the work experience are particularly adroit.

As the text makes abundantly clear, the factory was as much a social institution as an economic one, a de facto schoolhouse of American norms. Despite its characteristically wretched physical conditions, the workroom seems at times to have been a rather congenial place where, amidst the hum of sewing machines, the largely female labor force exchanged information regarding fashions, dating, job opportunities, and the latest in popular culture. To be sure, not everyone profited by having to go to work. One woman, her education thwarted by economic need, related: "I would like to write a poem / But I have no words. My grammar was ladies waists / And my schooling skirts." Still others, however, looked forward to the work experience. As one immigrant put it, "I confess, that I go to work with much pleasure. Often I can hardly await the minute . . . when work begins." By looking at the world of work from an internal, immigrant perspective, Glenn's objective is to highlight the often inextricable links between labor, gender, and ethnicity, and to make such connections, frequently unremarked upon in the scholarly literature, explicit and clear. "One of the goals of this book," she writes, "is to bring together the study of work, gender and ethnicity and to
describe working women’s particular experience as it was mediated not only by sex and class but also by the ways in which ethnic group culture shaped female culture and consciousness.” Weaving these three factors through an analysis of labor conditions, trade unionism, and the domestic economy of the tenement, Glenn casts a searching look at the qualities that made up the tapestry of the American Jewish experience and ultimately rendered it distinctive.

Toward that end, she draws heavily on voice—oral history and memoirs—and on the observations of those in government circles, the trade union movement, and the larger community of reformers who labored to better working conditions. This is fine as far as it goes; the problem is that Glenn’s research does not go far enough. While uncovering a battery of fresh information and insight, Glenn would have done well to mine the treasure-trove of materials available in Yiddish, especially when it comes to analyzing cultural attitudes toward marriage and work. In the absence of the kind of first-hand accounts found only in the Yiddish press or Yiddish memoir literature, Glenn presents at best a mediated account of what actually took place.

Furthermore, Glenn’s choice of subject matter and of social geography also proves to be somewhat delimiting. Because the book is cast almost entirely in terms of the rag trade and the factory, alternative forms and settings of Jewish women’s employment—domestic service, secretarial work, retail operations—are not given much play. Had the author taken into account, say, the hundreds of young department store clerks found behind the counters at Ridley’s and Bloomingdale’s or the aspiring bookkeepers, stenographers, and secretaries who made up the enrollment of the Hebrew Technical School for Girls, a pioneer in the vocational training of Jewish women, a richer, more composite portrait of the Jewish working woman would surely have resulted.

Still, despite these limitations, Daughters of the Shtetl stands as a nuanced and careful attempt to integrate the often-segmented and rigidly separated spheres of the Jewish woman’s experience in America.

—Jenna Weissman Joselit

Jenna Weissman Joselit is the author of Our Gang: Jewish Crime and the New York Jewish Community and New York’s Jewish Jews: The Orthodox Community of the Interwar Years. She is currently working on a book dealing with the evolution of American Jewish domestic culture.

A great teacher lives on through the continuity of the knowledge and passion for truth he instills in his students. Students may then become disciples. So it was with the savant Gerson Cohen, rabbi par excellence, librarian, teacher, scholar, and administrator. The late chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America was a devoted Jew schooled and rooted in the rabbinic tradition. He was also a consummate practitioner of what was called in the early renaissance of modern Jewish learning *hochmat yisrael*, the critical and scholarly approach to the study of the Jewish past. The scholarly essays collected in this volume, whose publication ten of his students facilitated, gives rich evidence of Gerson Cohen's talents, for as they demonstrate, the Jacob H. Schiff Distinguished Service Professor’s mind ranged over the gamut of Jewish thought and literature.

Introduced by the current chancellor and Jewish historian, Professor Ismar Schorch, and postscripted with an afterword by the chancellor emeritus, Professor Louis Finkelstein, this posthumous volume includes ten of Cohen's essays. They cover a wide range of themes. "Zion in Rabbinic Literature," for instance, documents the idea that the "land" Eretz Israel is inseverable from God and Israel. Cohen elaborates on Rabbi Simeon's teaching by underscoring that "the promise of the land as well as the eternal property of Israel, its eternal sanctity, was a living idea which could not fall into limbo" (p. 21). Several of the other essays deal with major exegetical themes encompassing the rabbinic heritage, providing a superb overview of the communal framework of talmudic times which incorporated them in a rationalized way into the "sacred system of Jewish belief."

It is, however, in the last essay, "German Jewry as Mirror of Modernity," that we see Cohen’s versatile mind at its best. The essay was first published in the *Year Book of the Leo Baeck Institute* (vol. 20, 1975) as the last and summary essay dealing with a century of the German Jewish experience coming to horrific termination in the Holocaust. Cohen surveys the offerings of the *Leo Baeck Year Book*
devoted to these themes and concludes that “it was German Jewry
that provided Jews everywhere with mature alternative models of
Jewish responses to modernity, from radical assimilation to militant
Zionism and neo-Orthodoxy, as well as a fresh rediscovery of the
Jewish past and reinterpretation and reformulation of the founda-
tions of Jewish identity and commitment” (p. 302). Germany Jewry in
synthesis held together, albeit tenuously, Jewish particularism (e.g.,
Zionism), universalism, and German culture. Perhaps one could
apply here the framework of Hegel and argue that the synthesis was
always confronted with its antithetical pull, which leads to multicul-
turalism, and its assimilatory pull to become part of the emerging
new conglomerate world community, called by a United States presi-
dent “the new world order.” How will Judaism in its old/new garb
face this emerging challenge?

To speculate on the fate of German Jewry in its “synthesis” as
Robert Weltsch portrays it, sans the Holocaust, gives us the impetus
to press forward to a resolution of the antithetical elements which
will in the future challenge the state of Zionism today, our newfound
universalism (or better, new globalism), and the new rediscovery of
the Jewish past (as presented in its new apologetic tendency by neo-
Hasidism), pronounced Jewish fundamentalism, and a new Jewish
learning which cannot field a Rosenzweig, Buber, or Leo Baeck.

My dear friend and colleague Gerson Cohen is no more. His schol-
arship and moral fiber endure in his writings and the forces of cre-
ative thought he unleashed. Professor Louis Finkelstein speaks for all
in his afterword when he writes, “He [Cohen] deals with equal clarity
and insight with all his subjects and thus enriches our understanding
of Jewish history and Jewish literature. He has placed us all in his
debt.”

—Alfred Gottschalk

Alfred Gottschalk is the president of the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute
of Religion and Professor of Bible and Jewish Thought. His most recent book is
_Ahad Ha'am and the Jewish National Spirit_ (Hebrew).

One evening in the mid-1920s Charley Phil Rosenberg, a rough bantamweight who had been nursed from a pushcart in the gutters of Jewish Harlem, was boxing at a midwestern fight club. During the match, Rosenberg recalled decades later, "some fellow kept hollering, 'Kill the Jew bastard.'" The Jewish boxer turned around, "took a mouthful of water and blood and I spit it right in his face. It was the mayor of Toledo!"

Rosenberg's journey from street kid to world champion is one of the many stories of accomplishment over adversity in this encyclopedic volume on Jewish participation in professional boxing. Covering two centuries, Ken Blady sets out to show that "more than in any other sport, the Jews have excelled in boxing." The book begins with the career of eighteenth-century English bareknuckle scrapper Daniel "The Light of Israel" Mendoza. Descended from Spanish Marranos, Mendoza was in every sense a man of "firsts": he was the first Jewish champion, the first fighter to charge an admission fee for his contests, the author of the first textbook on boxing technique, and the first Jew in modern British history to have a private audience with a reigning king (George III so admired the fighter's exploits that he invited Mendoza to Windsor to meet him).

Most of the entrants into Blady's hall of fame are not English but American. Around the start of the twentieth century, San Francisco produced two notable Jewish fighters, Joe Choynski and Abe Attell, but the flowering of Jewish fistiana occurred in New York between the two world wars. The outstanding boxer of this period, and one of the immortal figures in boxing history, was lightweight champion Benny Leonard. Born Benjamin Leiner in 1896, Leonard learned to fight as a boy on Manhattan's Lower East Side. His parents, Gershon and Minny Leiner, were impoverished arrivals from Russia with eight young mouths to feed; Gershon worked in a sweatshop seventy-two hours a week to support his family. Going pro at age fifteen, Leonard developed a repertoire of clever ring moves that propelled
him to a title victory in 1917. He held the crown for seven years and retired as undefeated champion; in all he fought 209 bouts, losing just five times. Leonard’s mastery brought him the adulation of New York’s Jewish press, which compared “Our Bennah” to Einstein: “He is, perhaps, even greater than Einstein,” the Jewish Daily Bulletin reported in March 1925, “for when Einstein was in America only thousands knew him, but Benny is known by millions.”

With his patent-leather hair, trunks emblazoned with the Star of David, and reputation of never fighting on religious holidays, “The Ghetto Wizard” became the symbol of success for aspiring Jewish fighters. A string of talented men, including Lew Tendler, Louis “Kid” Kaplan, Benny Bass, “Slapsie Maxie” Rosenbloom, triple-crown winner Barney Ross, and Al “Bummy” Davis followed in Leonard’s path. By the late 1920s Jewish American fighters dominated the ranks of professional boxing. Every division witnessed a Jewish champion except for the heavyweights. Ironically, Max Baer, whom gentile America regarded as Jewish when he won the heavyweight title in 1934, had a Scotch-Irish mother and did not benefit from the kind of loyal patronage among Jewish fight fans that other champions enjoyed.

Blady, who is a translator of Yiddish by trade, has assembled his study along the lines of a prosopography, or collective biography. The chapters are arranged chronologically, with a vignette for each pugilist. General readers will find the format accessible and the writing informative and entertaining. For historians already familiar with the sporting legends Blady looks at, the value of these chapters is in the questions they raise: how did class, community, and tradition shape the development of a Jewish boxing subculture? There have been many poor groups in the caldron of American urban society, yet only a few—the Irish, the Jews, the Italians, Blacks, and Latins—left a permanent imprint on boxing.

Why did Jewish boys take up fighting while their Greek and Portuguese counterparts did not? Jewish boxers drew sustenance from a core constituency of wage-earning, Yiddish-speaking males. One wonders: did women and salaried “Uptown” members of the faith also feel pride at the triumphs of Jewish title-holders? And why did the era of Jewish prizefighting decline abruptly in the late 1930s? Had
the author situated his study in the context of sport and social history, rather than treating each man's rise and fall as an isolated case, he might have been able to address some of these issues in greater depth. Scholars will wish there was an index, and the sparse documentation makes it difficult to ascertain where information was obtained.

Still, Blady's is an important achievement. He brings together for the first time material on a neglected episode in Jewish-American history. A Yiddish-English boxing glossary (any buxfyteh should know the difference between a chmalvye and a potch), a list of Jews who fought Jews for championship honors, ring records for dozens of boxers not included in the text, and one hundred carefully chosen prints and illustrations add to the work's appeal.

In the closing section of his recent book Patrimony, novelist Philip Roth describes discussing Hall of Fame with his dying father. "I remember the era very vividly of Tendler, Attell, and Leonard," eighty-six-year-old Herman Roth said. "Barney Ross. He was a helluva fighter. I saw him fight in Newark. There was Bummy Davis—he was a Jew. There was Slapsie Maxie Rosenbloom. Sure, I remember them." Then the elder Roth hit on what may have been the central force behind Jewish involvement in boxing: "You know how it was: these kids grew up, they had a tough life, the slums, no money, and they always had an adversary. The Christian religion was an adversary. They fought two battles. They fought because they were fighters, and they fought because they were Jews."

—Todd Postal

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In a recent review of Robert Friedman’s book about Rabbi Meir Kahane, Milton Viorst claims that the author “makes it painfully clear that Kahane is not an aberration, a demagogue sprung full-blown on an innocent society.” According to Friedman, the essential tragedy of Kahane is that he taught us that instead of the Jewish value system of caring for others, there is embedded within our collective psyche “a patch of ground on which the sun does not shine.” Apparently, this dark corner of our soul has allowed the Jews of Israel to commit the most scandalous acts against Arabs because, in Kahane’s own words, “our God is a God of vengeance. It’s nonsense to assume that vengeance is not a Jewish concept.”

This schizophrenic struggle of the contemporary Jew, between ethics and violence, is the primary problem that Paul Breines attempts to analyze in *Tough Jews*. It is important to note that when Breines discusses Kahane and the formation of the Jewish Defense League in 1968, he states that it “is not only striking as a Jewish event; it is also an almost representative American event.” He continues, “Not only did American Jews become Zionized; they . . . and Zionism . . . became Ramboized, that is, Americanized, as well.” Thus, for Breines, it is America that has been the spawning ground for this new image of the Jew. The American culture, with its history/mythology of the violent cowboy and gangster, has somehow coalesced into a new Jewish fantasy of toughness. This has led American Jews not only to refuse to criticize Israeli violence and militarism, but also to contribute to and applaud the new imagery of toughness in Israel itself. The tragic result of all this, according to Breines, is that “after 1967, Sartre’s observation regarding the inherent peacefulness of Jews was rendered increasingly obsolete.”

The basic problem with *Tough Jews* is that the author is dealing with two contrasting stereotypes whose importance he must exaggerate in order to prove his thesis that this new Jewish self-image has become the major paradigm of the Jew on our contemporary scene.
The book jacket itself leads the reader immediately into Breines's new Jewish world of unrepentant savagery. The front cover has a drawing of a powerful masculine hand, fist clenched and encased in brass knuckles. The back cover contains the following quotation from the book:

Images of Jewish wimps and nerds are being supplanted by those of the hardy, bronzed kibbutznik, the Israeli paratrooper and the Mossad agent. This book investigated two connected processes. There is, on one side, the waning of what could be called the Woody Allen figure, that is, the schlemiel: the pale, bespectacled, diminutive vessel of Jewish anxieties who cannot, indeed, must not hurt a flea and whose European forebears fell by the millions to Jew-hating savagery. And there is, on the other side, the emergence in American culture of less whiny, more manly and muscular types, sometimes referred to as Jewish James Bonds.

Thus, since Breines's thesis insists on the shift from one stereotype to its opposite, he has to make them appear equally valid. Before we can accept the Jew as James Bond, Breines has to convince us of the historical truth of the Jew as a "Woody Allen...schlemiel." In order to accomplish this, he constantly emphasizes the idea that "tough Jews are distinctive precisely because of the Jewish history of weakness and the Jewish claim to the moral high ground of gentleness." Breines's charge of "weakness" is symbolized over and over by his description of the Jew as the victim of anti-Semitism proceeding passively to his doom. His definition of "gentleness" seems to relate to those Jews who, by conviction, believe "that Jews must not be violent." He tries hard to convince readers of this stereotype mainly so he can sustain his argument that a new and more dangerous image of the Jew has emerged. History, however, refuses to cooperate with his analysis. The survival of the Jew, be it from shtetl to kibbutz or from ghetto to suburbia, testifies to another set of historical dynamics. The tough Jew is not new; he has always played a significant role in our past, if we accept the dictionary definition of "toughness": "Capable of sustaining great tension or strain without breaking." Any other use of the word "tough" demeans Jewish history, and insists on seeing weakness where there is strength.

It is of no little interest to note here the political value systems that guide the author. Breines confesses to being both anti-nationalist and
anti-Zionist. He sees nationalism "as a curse that has been the source of untold misery since its emergence in the French Revolution." He believes that in Israel, nationalism has been the cause of violence, conformity, and "paranoia in the face of difference." Breines also criticizes Zionists because of their assumption "that Jews need a Jewish state in order to be tough." Guided as he is by these values, it is no wonder that the author views the so-called new image of the Jew in negative rather than positive terms.

The most surprising element in the book is the confession by Breines of what prompted him to engage in this study of what he sees as the new Jewish prototype. It was, he says, "hatched from what can only be called a psychosomatic womb." Suffering from insomnia, and following a friend's suggestion, Breines read the spy thriller *Triple*, by Ken Follett, which, by his own definition, "changed my life." The hero of the novel is Nat Dickstein, a Mossad commander with the frail body of an Isaac Bashevis Singer (Breines's choice of a model) and the murderous morals of Attila the Hun. Dickstein is the new Jewish hero, merging the old weak and passive body with the force and energy of retributive justice. Breines's use of sexual imagery to describe his feelings after reading this book is most revealing.

He states that he "was seduced by Nat Dickstein," that Dickstein's achievements "brought on adrenalin rushes and raised goose bumps of excitement," and when Dickstein killed off his Russian and Egyptian enemies, Breines "experienced a visceral pleasure." Later on, Breines places himself with Freud, Singer, and Philip Roth in sharing "a common ground: we are all (Jewish) men who do not want to appear to be women." Breines views the tough, masculine image as also being the result of "male concerns about a perceived threat of emasculation provoked in part by contemporary feminism." By self-analysis, Breines finally rejects the Nat Dickstein within himself, but continually blames Zionism for using the stereotype of the weak and gentle Jew to give a moral justification for "physical violence, including killing or even sadism."

For this reader, Breines never comes to terms with which image of the Jew he either prefers or totally rejects. This ambivalence resurfaces throughout the book, and the real enemy that clearly emerges
for the author is Zionism, which is embodied in the character of Nat Dickstein. The only value of *Tough Jews* is that it suggests the need for a profound and meaningful study of both stereotypes. It is unfortunate that the book does not come close to achieving this end.

—Matthew Chimsky

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American Jewry, too often denigrated as wanting in support for Jewish intellectual enterprise, has in fact amassed a record which need inspire no shame among us today. Great institutions and achievements of cultural importance in Jewish life may be credited to the American Jewish community: schools of higher Judaic learning, yeshivot, journalistic efforts which have frequently been at the least respectable and occasionally even distinguished, and *inter alia* what I will call agencies of publication—book clubs, if one will; first among these latter in quality and significance, the Jewish Publication Society of America. The Society’s first century is ably set forth in the present volume by Jonathan Sarna, who is right to see in the JPS story “a centrally important theme: the development and shaping of American Jewish culture.”

Perhaps the Jewish Publication Society will not appear so striking an achievement in our tangled late-twentieth-century context, but its nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century history can occasion only admiration and wonder. The community which brought the JPS into existence in the 1880s was far smaller, far less opulent—but clearly not one whit less resourceful—than its present-day successor. Even a century ago, notwithstanding its remoteness from the venerable centers of Judaism in the Old World, and notwithstanding the assimilatory pressures it confronted on every side, American Jewry managed to produce some remarkably gifted leaders, individuals of prodigious energy and imagination, and began developing a distinctive culture of its own, in the main an English-language culture meant to provide something of an equipoise between age-old Jewish mores and the still novel challenges of North American modernity.

No one ought to look on this undertaking as anything less than a sterling contribution to the history of cultural adaptation. The Jewish Publication Society supplies only one instance—but there is considerable evidence in Professor Sarna’s account to suggest that it is in many respects an astonishing instance—of how an immigrant com-
munity struggled to cope with a dauntingly unfamiliar social milieu: unknown languages (i.e., the problem of English for the immigrant, the problem of anything but English for their children), a novel and often-enough precarious economy, an individualistic mindset for which émigrés from Central and Eastern Europe had scant preparation. Treasures of the Old World European intellect were translated into English or, if already translated, made available in American editions: Heinrich Graetz’s monumental and romantic *History of the Jews*, Ahad Ha-Am’s selected essays, collections of poems from the Spanish Golden Age, chronicles of major European Jewish communities, rabbinic and folkloristic classics, European Jewish belles lettres, a series of richly detailed holiday and life-cycle anthologies, philosophical studies, and ultimately works reflective of the American experience. The *American Jewish Year Book* appeared as early as 1899, though nearly three decades passed before an edition of Rebecca Gratz’s letters and a biographical study of Mordecai M. Noah would appear under JPS auspices. A new translation of the Hebrew Bible (more accurately, perhaps, an adaptation of the King James Bible) was undertaken in the 1890s (Isaac Leeser’s mid-nineteenth-century translation was apparently deemed inelegant).

Jonathan Sarna seems disinclined to say so in so many words, but his book will not discourage anyone who thinks that boldness never much recommended itself to the Society’s policy makers (it may be that the Leeser effort was thought not so much inelegant as excessively independent; Sarna puts it this way: “To prefer the translation made by a lone American Jew over that [the King James] made by scholarly English Gentiles seemed to [English Jews]—and to some American critics of the Society as well—provincial in the extreme”). What was held in esteem and judged worthy of loyalty was something I am minded to call a sense of Jewish historical identity: recognition, if I may put it thus, that Jewish life had inevitably and profoundly changed in the New World and needed guidance, intellectual and aesthetic guidance, in establishing for itself a proper relationship to the Jewish past, a respectable memory—finally, it is tempting to speculate, a comfortably bourgeois memory. It would seem inarguable that the Jewish Publication Society has never wished to question or undermine the middle-class character of American Jewry. That character has, if anything, been celebrated by the Society: if not *expressio verbis*, then
expressio gestis. (It may shed more light on the sort of controversy sparked in the 1940s by the proposal to publish Maurice Samuel's pro-
Zionist Harvest in the Desert. As Sarna writes, "Should the Society agree to publish a work that was . . . partisan . . ., or should it confine itself to impartial analyses?" He quotes Horace Stern: "It is not the function of the Society to enter into present-day political or economic subjects." In the end, of course, Samuel's book did appear with the JPS imprint, but that was in large part because the Society's trustees were determined to avoid "a cleavage.")

A celebration of virtue is very much in the (Mendelssohnian?) spirit of the JPS. That tendency or prejudice, whatever one may term it, has probably not been a disservice to American Jewry, which is, after all, spectacularly, even classically bourgeois in way of life and social experience (classically, I say, which may contribute to the continued attachment to liberal politics manifest in American Jewish life). The Society never saw itself as called on to offer the community a revolutionary critique or rationale; it was called on primarily to offer opportunities for a more informed, more reflective insight into what had passed for Jewish thought and Jewish lore in pre-American generations. That "mission" may not be, may never have been, especially bold, but it deserves no scorn, even though it may have risked becoming too automatic, too routine, too much of a reflex. There is room in American Jewish life for the more abrasive or more provocative images provided by a Philip Roth or a Grace Paley, and surely there is room for the more liturgical, more devotional productions characteristic of the JPS—not that it should be overlooked that the Society has also made available major works of fiction by, among others, Sholem Asch, Bialik, Buber, Ludwig Lewisohn, Soma Morgenstern, Zangwill, and Yehoash as well as poetry by T. Carmi, Jacob Glatstein, Else Lasker-Schiiler, Dan Pagis, Gavriel Preil, et al.

The record is an honorable one, and Sarna has treated it accordingly. His book will be useful for generations to come.

—Stanley F. Chyet

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Although the subtitle of *New York’s Jewish Jews* refers to the Orthodox community as if it were a monolithic body, Jenna Joselit modifies and narrows the subject in her introduction. She will not attempt to describe all of New York City’s Orthodox Jews with their various backgrounds and patterns of behavior; she will deal with the modern “Americanizing Orthodox Jews” through “their representative institutions . . . the rabbinate, the synagogue, the modern day school—and certain key issues” (p. xiii).

In following through on this project, Joselit concentrates on the lives and activities of two rabbis, Joseph Lookstein of Kehilath Jeshurun and Leo Jung of the Jewish Center. Rabbi Lookstein’s synagogue, Kehilath Jeshurun, and the day school housed there, Ramaz (named for Rabbi Moses Z. Margolies, whose photograph graces the cover of the book), are the paradigm synagogue and day school. They are the foci of Joselit’s book. Rabbi Leo Jung, termed by Joselit “a more restrained but equally emblematic and influential modern Orthodox New York rabbi” (p. 68), receives less space than Rabbi Lookstein, but is accorded much respect and admiration by the author.

Other Orthodox rabbis and their synagogues, and the various yeshivot and day schools founded in New York City during the interwar years receive short shrift. For a book about the Orthodox community, an inordinate number of references are made to maverick Conservative/Reconstructionist Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan.

Joselit devotes an entire chapter to “the sacred life of American Orthodox women,” a very welcome addition to recent feminist scholarship. She provides us with important information about changing attitudes toward women, about the work of sisterhoods, and about the establishment of the Women’s Branch of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America. She stresses the role of the Women’s Branch in organizing adult education classes. She also
points up the different emphases placed upon two of the mitsvot associated with women—kashrut and taharat ha-mishpahah. “While the ritual observance of kashruth was attended with constant publicity . . . the observance of the Jewish family-purity laws . . . was treated with considerable diffidence” (p. 115). She makes a telling point in her conclusion, that the “efforts to render mikvah compatible with secular society fell wide of the mark . . . [and] its practice fell into disuse and disregard” (p. 122). Considering the content of this chapter, which describes Orthodox Jewish women’s lack of a role in public worship, its title, “The Jewish Priestess and Ritual,” is singularly inappropriate.

Joselit mentions, all too briefly, the creation of the Young Israel movement by “college-age, largely native-born New Yorkers from traditional homes” responding “to the pressures of modernity” (p. 37). This movement seems to fit perfectly into the framework of the book as proposed in the introduction, worthy of a chapter to itself, but unfortunately Joselit has not devoted more than a few paragraphs to it.

The popularity of Irving Howe’s World of Our Fathers, and its widespread acceptance as the historical reference for Eastern European Jews, brought reactions in its wake. Were “our fathers” all secular leftists, some asked.

Responses to these questions have come mainly from men who are themselves part of the observant Jewish community, such as William Helmreich, Samuel Heilman, and Charles Liebman. Biographies of Orthodox rabbis like Rabbi Eliezer Silver and Rabbi Bernard Revel provide additional information. Joselit’s book is the “first interpretive historical account of the American Orthodox Jewish experience” (blurb on back cover). As such, it should be approached as history rather than as sociological analysis. As history, it fails in its goals, for it lacks objectivity and scope.

In her introduction, Joselit bemoans “the absence of a body of literature on Orthodoxy’s tenure in the New World.” She herself, however, does not avail herself of much of the existing literature in Yiddish and Hebrew. There are only a few references to the Morgn Zhurnal and the Judisches Tageblatt, only one reference to a Yiddish book, and only one reference to a Hebrew book. There were certainly she’elot u-
teshuvot (responsa) published in the interwar period, primary source materials for a historian, as well as Orthodox Jewish periodicals.

The lack of a bibliography is a glaring omission in a serious scholarly study. I had to plow through twenty-eight pages of notes looking for references to Yiddish and Hebrew sources. Errors in Hebrew (e.g., referring to Agudat Ha-Rabbanim as "the Agudat"; shalosh se'udot [shalesh sudes in Standard Yiddish] as Shalah sheudas; the frequent use of the derogatory "shnuddering") lead the reviewer to doubt Joselit's mastery of the two languages necessary for research on Orthodoxy: Yiddish and Hebrew. "Shnuddering" is not "public donations at the time of the Torah reading" (p. 35). No donations were made in Orthodox synagogues on the Sabbath! Joselit is referring to the practice of announcing one's contribution (nader, from the Hebrew word for "vow"), to be paid after the Sabbath, of course. By consistently referring to the practice as "shnuddering" she is siding with its detractors, a most unobjective position for an historian.

Another omission in a book which is an attempt to describe New York's Orthodox Jews is the lack of reference to New York's largest Orthodox Jewish community of the interwar years—Brownsville, Brooklyn. There were more synagogues, yeshivas, modern Hebrew schools, kosher butchers, religious Zionist youth groups, and Yiddish-speaking Jews in Brownsville than elsewhere in New York City. The late chief rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Herzog, facetiously referred to it as "Yerushalayim ha-gedolah" (private communication). Joselit's "New York" is almost entirely Manhattan-centered. She should have made this clear in her title or subtitle.

In spite of these omissions and errors, Joselit's book should be viewed as a contribution to the study of a vital, yet often overlooked, element of the American Jewish community.

—Ida Cohen Selavan

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On page 193 of *Jews Against Zionism*, Thomas Kolsky makes reference to Abraham Cronbach. The reference is limited to the American Council for Judaism's publication of Dr. Cronbach's *Judaism for Today*. No other mention is made of Cronbach. This is typical of Kolsky, whose book is an overly sympathetic account of that bitterly anti-Zionist and extremely assimilationist group. For example, Kolsky could have told us that in 1945, as dead and walking corpses of Hitler's brutality shocked our consciences, Cronbach engaged in a campaign to prevent the punishment of Nazi murderers. Cronbach was a self-styled pacifist, a leading member of the American Council for Judaism, and a professor at the Hebrew Union College. His efforts found ample support in the top echelons of the American Council for Judaism. Postwar German right-wingers and unrepentant Nazis had praise for the ACJ and its support of Cronbach's efforts. Nice company!

The Cronbach episode was symptomatic of the pathology of the American Council for Judaism. Always eager to denigrate Zionists and to gain favor with the pro-Arab officials at the State Department, the ACJ, led by Elmer Berger, was far more sinister than Kolsky admits. On pages 166, 169, and 192, he mentions the efforts of Alfred Lilienthal to prevent the creation of Israel. The reader is not informed that the very same Lilienthal wrote a book entitled *What Price Israel* in which he gave currency to the anti-Semitic canard that the Jews of Eastern Europe were descended from the Khazars and not from the biblical Israelites. Arab delegates to the United Nations jumped on this as proof that the Jews had no place in Israel, having come from the Crimea and not from Zion.

The American Council for Judaism was founded in 1942 by Reform rabbis to enunciate the universal and prophetic teachings embodied in the Pittsburgh Platform. These rabbis sincerely believed that Judaism was up for grabs as the future faith of many Americans. Shorn of its nationalist ambitions (Zionism), divorced from its anti-
quated orientalism (customs and ceremonies), fitted rigidly into a Protestant-type worship, and sprinkled generously with super-universalism, the ACJ was ready to conquer America.

By 1945, the rabbis who had joined the ACJ had left it. It was obvious to them (except for Elmer Berger) that their faith in a universal Judaism was being subverted by a blind anti-Zionism. Long before 1948, where Kolsky stops, Berger had turned the ACJ into a "running dog" of pro-Arab propagandists.

The membership of the ACJ was never large. Except for San Francisco, the bulk of its few members lived in small cities of the Midwest and South. Wealthy, assimilated, raised in classical Reform temples, isolated from the teeming Jewish masses of metropolitan America, ACJ members were told of a world where anti-Semitism was diminishing, tolerance increasing, and liberal Judaism advancing. Elmer Berger, ideologue and extremist, sold them a Disneyland version of the future and a corrupt image of the Jewish past. By 1948, history had doomed the ACJ to oblivion.

Elmer Berger continued, however, to propagate his extreme anti-Israel position. So much so that he was fired by the ACJ in 1967 for being openly pro-Arab and too extreme. Supported by Arab oil monies from Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, he remains even today a lonely and pathetic figure outside the pale of Jewish life.

What is not missing from Jews Against Zionism is often treated in a benign manner. Kolsky tells us that the ACJ competed with the Zionist UJA by forming its own Philanthropic Fund. Admitting that the Fund had few assets, Kolsky writes that it made contributions to a hospital in Jerusalem and the Red Magen David, and to the resettling of some refugees in Palestine. The sums expanded were negligent, and the refugees resettled in Palestine-Israel were German Jews who retained a prewar anti-Zionist predilection which the ACJ shared and encouraged. Here we have a surrealistic picture of American anti-Zionists sending German anti-Zionists to Zion.

The Philanthropic Fund, which Kolsky treats somewhat cavalierly, had as its focus a rather sinister cause. According to Elmer Berger and Alfred Lilienthal, the survivors of the Holocaust were "Judaists." In their parlance, Judaists were Jews by religion whom the ACJ considered nationals of the countries in which they had resided prior to
World War II. As a consequence of the ACJ’s unique interpretation of Judaism and Jewish history, the Fund was eager to aid in the repatriation of the refugees to their native lands, where, in concert with their “countrymen,” they would establish this mythical liberal, progressive, tolerant world in which Jews would share all responsibilities and obligations of citizenship. To remain loyal to its perception of Judaism and to its unyielding opposition to Zionism, the ACJ was prepared to sacrifice the small remnant which had barely survived the most devastating tragedy in Jewish history.

It is assumed by some, including Kolsky, that the ACJ was instrumental in amending the U.S. immigration laws in favor of increasing the flow of refugees after the war. While the ACJ did exert some influence within the anti-Zionist circles of the State Department, it had absolutely no impact on the Congress or the White House. In Congress, only two or three isolationists retained some liaison with Berger. The liberalization of the immigration policy was largely a result of the 1948 national elections. Harry S. Truman, challenged in his own party by the Dixiecrats on the right and by the Progressives on the left, looked to the Jewish community for aid and comfort. The opening of American’s doors to Jewish refugees was an act which won Truman the hearts of most Jews. The ACJ claim that it was instrumental in this effort has no merit and cannot be substantiated by any objective criterion.

Still, given the fact that ninety-nine out of every hundred Americans (Jews included) have no idea what the ACJ was or when it existed or why, Kolsky provides a service. What he includes in his book is treated factually. His scholarship is not in dispute, nor can one question the accuracy of his data, but whether by design or for reasons of economy, he omits certain important facts and characterizations. His often-sympathetic approach and a glossing over or elimination of the more controversial aspects of the ACJ and Elmer Berger conspire to paint a more favorable picture than history demands.

Finally, Kolsky ends Jews Against Zionism with a melancholy admission that the ACJ was a complete failure. However, he still insists that, here and there, the organization was based on some laudatory principles and spoke for some eternal verities. History has adjudged the ACJ and found it wanting in every respect. In time
another more reflective work may reveal the strange and divisive role which the ACJ played during its short but tempestuous life.

Fortunately, the vast preponderance of the always insignificantly small membership of the ACJ returned to mainstream Jewish life. The days of the Beth Israel Congregation in Houston, Texas, were a temporary and sad episode of fleeting ACJ influence in a few communities. When this congregation “outlawed” Zionism in 1943, banned any semblance of kosher facilities, refused entrance to anyone wearing a kippah, eliminated Hebrew, and looked upon its spiritual leader in a Protestant-like vein, we witnessed a paradigm of American Judaism as Elmer Berger would have had it. Fortunately, almost all of these misguided souls became supportive of the very causes they had so vehemently opposed when they discovered that a hoax and a perversion of Judaism had been perpetrated upon them.

In *Jews Against Zionism* Thomas A. Kolsky deals with an organization that grew out of early Reform Jewish principles, was initially populated by sincere, if misguided, rabbis, and was eventually hijacked by opportunists, assimilationists, and anti-Israel, pro-Arab propagandists. It is a good book for the many who have never heard of the American Council for Judaism. Its sympathetic tone and exclusion of damning material notwithstanding, the book still manages to convey the very corruptive essence of its subject.

Psychologically, one has difficulty comprehending how a group of Jews could organize for the purpose of opposing the re-creation of Jewish life in Israel. When such an effort became distasteful, decent members of the ACJ attempted to make of it an organization for the propagation of liberal Judaism. Mainstream, normative Reform Judaism was being altered by an infusion of more traditionally oriented rabbis and congregants. There was sufficient place in Reform Judaism for a group dedicated to the preservation of the prophetic vision and the deflection of “Orthodox” incursions into temple practices and services. Added to its many other sins is the ACJ’s emphasis on the anti-Zionist issue to the detriment of liberal and prophetic impulses within Reform Judaism. Elmer Berger’s travels through the Arab countries, his attendance at Arab conventions and student unions, his progressive alienation from every Jewish organization, his
incessant deprecation of everything Israeli or traditionally Jewish or historically Hebrew made the ACJ the pariah it deserved to be.

Thomas A. Kolsky tries very hard to put a nice face on the American Council for Judaism. He fails, not because of incompetence on his part but because the actions of the ACJ were self-condemning and no one can alter history so adroitly as to cover up facts.

Let it be said of Kolsky that his book does well with a subject that is difficult to beautify no matter how much historical plastic surgery is done. The American Council for Judaism was a sad and divisive element—and it shall so go down in history.

—I. B. Koller

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The city of Buenos Aires is the home of the largest Jewish community on the Latin American subcontinent. The size of this community, the diversity of its Jewish origins, its organizational structure, and the fact that it represents the largest Jewish presence in an Iberian culture have already made it the subject of several scholarly works in English. None, however, offer as thorough a historical groundwork as Victor Mirelman's treatment of the subject. Published in 1990, Mirelman's *Jewish Buenos Aires* seems at first glance to be a younger brother to the studies by Eugene Sofer and Robert Weisbrot. Yet the opposite is true: based on a Ph.D. dissertation presented to Columbia University in 1973, it is, in fact, the elder brother, and for the benefit of both the professional and the lay reader it should have been published long before them. However, better late than never . . .

Whereas Mirelman modestly calls his work “an essay” (pp. 16–17), it is a sound and comprehensive historical study of four formative decades. In his introduction, Mirelman promises to describe “the changing facade of the Jewish community in Buenos Aires,” encompassing immigration and settlement processes, Judeo-Christian relations, the creation and development of institutional life, and the religious and cultural profile of the younger, native-born generation. He also promises to unfold before us the “cosmopolitan” nature of the Jewish community—the Ashkenazi majority on the one hand, and the four independent non-Ashkenazi communities (Ladino speakers and Jews from Morocco, Aleppo, and Damascus) on the other, which he, like many others, groups together as “Sephardi.” Such phenomena as political pluralism and religious conflicts among the Ashkenazim, as well as another problem exclusive to this community—the Jewish white slave trade—are also promised an adequate handling.

The author indeed lives up to his promises. He leads us through all these subjects in ten well-documented chapters based on an enormously rich array of primary source material and especially the minutes of board meetings and other records of twenty-five Jewish
organizations, both Ashkenazi and "Sephardi." Other archival materials derive from the Jewish archives in Buenos Aires and Jerusalem. Many aspects of the research are substantiated by an impressive list of official government documents and virtually all the Jewish periodicals published in Argentina over a span of four decades. All this is supplemented by references to the Jewish press in Europe, an extensive bibliography, and 900 notes, which appear at the end of the text (pp. 237-281), where they do not disturb the fluency of the reading yet offer a wealth of information and insights to the professional historian.

In writing the multifaceted history of a particular community, one must choose between a chronological study which subdivides the period of research and deals with each subperiod separately, and a "vertical" study which traces the development of various issues throughout the whole period. The task becomes even more difficult when, as in this case, the history of the country and the history of the Jewish people at large are involved. Dr. Mirelman has elected the second alternative. Consequently, the reader finds all the material related to religious institutions and observances of both the Ashkenazi and non-Ashkenazi communities in chapter 3, whereas the related subjects of education and welfare are dealt with separately in chapters 6 and 8 respectively. The disadvantage of this vertical approach is that subjects which have been less visible in Jewish historiography—for example, the development of the non-Ashkenazi immigrant communities—lose much of their coherence. Another disadvantage is the depreciation in importance of the different chronological subperiods, such as those created by World War I.

On the other hand, for some subjects, such as the history of Zionism and various political parties (chap. 5), the fight against white slavery (chap. 9), and the efforts to create a centralized community (chap. 10), a thematic structure works quite well.

Among the subjects of particular interest to the American reader is the nature of Argentinean anti-Semitism, which is discussed in chapter 2. "Jews and Gentiles in Argentina" dwells upon all the anti-Semitic incidents and literature in Argentina from 1881 to 1930. Special mention is made of the wide-scale, semiofficial pogrom in January 1919, during the period of severe social strife in Buenos Aires.
known in Argentinean history as “The Tragic Week.” However, nowhere does the author elaborate upon the wider relationship between the host society and the Jews, i.e., the legitimacy of non-Catholics as full members of the Argentinean nation. “Who is Argentinean?” was an implicit question over which Argentineans had been divided ever since the writing of their Constitution in 1853, when the liberals were uppermost in the government. Even then, it was agreed that the presidency and vice-presidency were positions which could only be filled by Catholics.

In the section on the “decreasing influence of the synagogue” (p. 99), the author describes the further victories of those who advocated separation of church and state in the domains of education (education law, 1884) and personal status (civil registration law, 1886; civil marriages, 1888). Yet he fails to indicate that the political losers in 1853 and the 1880s made a remarkable comeback. In the 1910s and especially after the 1920s, they succeeded in promoting clerical Catholicism as the new Argentinean nationalism, thereby undermining the legitimacy of the Jews even more so than that of other non-Catholic Argentineans. At the same time, nothing is said of the fact that staunch liberals like ex-President Domingo F. Sarmiento fought for the separation of church and state in government schools precisely because they envisaged a “unified” mono-cultural Argentine nation with little tolerance for linguistic, cultural, or ethnic pluralism, which the perpetuation of Jewish (or Italian) existence would imply. This extreme, “melting pot” ideology was shared later by cultural-nationalists like Ricardo Rojas and socialists like Juan B. Justo (pp. 56–58, 68–70). In Rojas’s epoch-making La Restauración Nacionalista, which has been a classic since 1910, a vicious attack was let loose on the schools in the Jewish agricultural colonies. Ironically, the Jewish Colonization Association, which ran these schools, sought to produce the very type of citizen Rojas was after—sound nationalist Argentineans of the Jewish faith. As late as 1926, when a Jewish professor of philosophy, Leon Dujovne, gave Rojas, who was then rector of the University of Buenos Aires, a copy of Simon Dubnow’s historical work in Spanish, he reiterated the question raised by Juan Justo: why a separate Jewish history for native Argentineans?
Despite structural problems, and a few minor flaws which are virtually unavoidable in a work of this size (for instance, table I, p. 21 claims to provide figures for net Jewish immigration when it actually refers to Jews entering Argentina), Victor Mirelman’s work remains undiminished as a much-awaited major contribution to the field of Latin American Jewish history and a valuable aid in the understanding of contemporary Jewish history as a whole.

—Haim Avni

Haim Avni is Professor of Modern Jewish History at the Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His most recent English-language publication is *Argentina and the Jews: A History of Jewish Immigration* (1991).

Notes


Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

I look forward to reading the biography of Abba Hillel Silver reviewed in the Archives (Fall/Winter 1991, pp. 235–243). As a native of the state of Ohio and a student at the Jewish Institute of Religion during the critical years of the struggle for the State of Israel, when Wise brought Weizmann and other prominent Zionists to meet his students, I was afforded perspective the reviewer lacked.

Wise and Weizmann, whatever their disagreements, were fast friends from the time they met at the First Zionist Congress in Basle. We saw Wise give Weizmann a ring Herzl had given him. Of course, neither relished being displaced in the Zionist leadership by Silver on the bogus issue of militancy versus appeasement. Everyone knew that “Eretz Israel undivided and undiminished” was a slogan, and that a diminished state after two millennia was a great achievement.

Silver was a political conservative, a lifelong Republican, and a friend of Senator Taft of Ohio. Wise, the Democrat, had entree to Truman and brought Silver and Weizmann to the White House. Weizmann described the scene in some detail and delighted in recounting how you could not distinguish between the militant and the so-called appeaser. When we asked Weizmann why he was not more militant, he said, “Do you think I would not like to unpack my heart of the accumulated bitterness of all these years while our people were dying, and walk out and slam the doors. I could only do it once.” Silver’s conservatism caused him problems with the Democrats and ultimately with the Labor party in Israel. Still it was his militancy that helped mobilize the Jews, and the American people and the Congress in support of Israel. Our government finally understood that the self-delegated anti-Zionist Jewish leaders did not speak for the Jews.

The State Department was not indifferent, as the reviewer suggests. It was implacably opposed to Jewish immigration and to the State of Israel. Read Clark Clifford’s autobiography and discover how Warren Austin had instructions to undo the Partition plan at the U.N. at the very moment Truman recognized Israel. The best they could
get from Marshall was a reluctant agreement not to object. When Marshall said he had never heard of Ben-Gurion, he was expressing icy disdain, not ignorance.

Silver's role in mobilizing Jewish public opinion in the face of the opposition of the Jewish religious and financial establishment was pivotal. In turn, grass-roots Zionist efforts moved the Congress and the President to overrule the State Department and Israel was established. These inspired leaders, together with the Yishuv brought Israel into being when the window of opportunity was open for a brief instant. We are all in their debt.

Rabbi David Greenberg
East Hampton, New York

To the Editor:

In his review essay “The Last Great Rabbi?” Evyatar Friesel attributes the decline of Abba Hillel Silver, a Zionist leader, to his autocratic personality and conduct. “Silver was brought down in a tempest when, in early 1949, he was toppled by a strange coalition of American non-Zionists and Zionists, backed by the Israelis.” He adds, “Soon the structure collapsed beneath Silver, and his adversaries only formalized what had already occurred.”

To fault Silver for the implosion of American Zionism is simplistic. Friesel omits all reference to a major Israeli-based factor which was, at the very least, a strong contributing agent to the dissolution of American Zionism. That was the well-known position by David Ben-Gurion opposing the continuation of a Zionist movement, since a Jewish state was already in existence. His well-known argument that the only Zionists lived in Israel contributed mightily toward the collapse of Zionism in America. This is far more convincing than the argument about Silver’s personality.

While Silver undoubtedly had many enemies, as all strong leaders do, his domination of the Zionist movement in America was the result of more than a “coup.” Anyone who was involved in the Silver-led struggle for the creation of a “Jewish Commonwealth,” participated in his strategy meetings, and witnessed the mass adulation of that leader, domineering as he was, would know that there was a
manifestation of response to the needs of the American Jewish community.

It was well known that Ben-Gurion was a vigorous political opponent of Silver, and it was reported that he strongly resisted any suggestion that Silver might seek the presidency of the State of Israel. There's also evidence that Silver may have coveted that office and was thwarted. I witnessed him at a post-Israel victory rally in New York, at which a huge banner stretching across the balcony read, "Weizmann for President." Silver paused at one point and said, "It's a bit premature to speculate about who will be President of Israel."

Friesel also overlooks the understanding between Ben-Gurion and Jacob Blaustein of the American Jewish Committee, in which the former committed the fortunes of Israel to the politically and financially more powerful non-Zionist community, rather than to the Zionist movement, in which Ben-Gurion had lost confidence.

These elements, based primarily in Israel and centered in philosophic differences, present a deeper understanding of why Zionism in America suffered a grievous blow.

Rabbi David Polish
Evanston, Illinois
**Brief Notices**


For the past two decades or so, American Jews have been on a kind of manic-depressive ride into the Jewish future. The pessimists see nothing but the continuing erosion of a people and a faith, infected with the bacillus of intermarriage and secularization. The optimists, on the other hand, point to numerous mini-"revivals" taking place in the community: a return to spirituality, to the study of the Yiddish language, to the increased number of students attending Jewish day schools, to the *baal teshuvah* phenomenon (those who return to the traditions of the faith) and a host of other indicators.

Bershtel and Graubard have interviewed a wide range of those involved in the revivals and have reached one interesting and obviously important conclusion: "The Jews are not encountering modern America; they are modern America." And with that begins the wild and complex ride into the American Jewish future.


We all have images of the classic orphans' home. A dark and dreary place where autocratic tyrants rule with violence over innocent little ones, already suffering from the loss of parents; it is the stuff with which we threaten our own children in moments of exasperation.

Hyman Bogen did not see the Hebrew Orphan Asylum of New York in quite that way during the years he was a resident there from 1932 to 1941. Neither did the humorist Art Buchwald, who was associated with the Hebrew Orphan Asylum (HOA) for a number of years during his youth.
Founded in 1860, the HOA provided a place of refuge and a place of growth for thousands of Jewish orphans in New York in the eighty years of its existence until 1941. During that time, the HOA called upon the services of some of the most illustrious names in the history of American Jewish life to help give it direction and financial support. Hyman Bogen has done a fine job in writing the history of this important New York and American Jewish institution. One senses that his effort was in part a very great labor of love.


The millions of Jews who have come to the United States since the original twenty-three landed in the New Amsterdam colony in 1654 have consistently been faced with the question—what does it mean to be a Jew in America?

Professor Naomi Cohen, one of the truly important scholars of the American Jewish experience, has produced an excellent volume that seeks to answer this question in the context of the relationship between America as Jewish dream and as Jewish reality.

The dream centered on the American Jewish belief in the apparent American national willingness to keep separate the relationship between religion and the central government.

To a people such as the Jews, who historically had been denied the fruits of full equality in the lands of their birth because of their religious beliefs and the negative influence of the Christian churches, such a separation was crucial.

Yet the reality was that for a great many Protestants America was a Protestant nation whose only responsibility to “Jews, Turks and Infidels” was a kind of benevolent toleration. Church and state were to be bound morally if not legally, and they sought to ensure such a condition with an amendment “baptizing” the Constitution, the teaching of religion in the public schools, and the strict enforcement of Sunday closing laws.

Jews in Christian America is an outstanding account of how American Jews strove to fulfill their dream and struggled to overcome Protestant reality.

Gloversville, New York, is a small community located in the foothills of the southern Adirondack Mountains. It is a small town like many small towns across the country, noted for the fact that for over forty years it was the glove capital of America.

But there is a difference. Gloversville's Jewish community can boast of a number of extraordinary sons: Lucius M. Littauer, a five-term Congressman, who was a devoted philanthropist and the founder of Harvard University's important School of Government; Samuel Goldwyn, a pioneer of the motion picture industry; and Harry Starr, head of the Littauer Foundation, a prominent national Jewish leader who in his younger days led the fight against the infamous Jewish quotas at Harvard University.

Gloversville was also a microcosm of the Jewish experience in the United States and mirrored the emergence of an American Jewry from the sometimes acerbic relationships of German and East European Jewish communities.

Herbert M. Engel offers a very warm, informal "insider's" view of Gloversville's Jewish history from the perspective of the son of Gloversville workers who made—what else—gloves.


Arthur Hertzberg is as close to a Jewish H. L. Mencken "Bad-Boy of Baltimore" figure as is realistically possible. Feisty, always ready for an intellectual skirmish, and overly provocative, Hertzberg is nevertheless one of the most brilliant commentators available on the Jewish experience.

He maintains this status in *Jewish Polemics,* a book of Hertzberg's essays, some previously published, which takes on Israel, political Zionism, American Jewish life and culture, and Christianity. One does not always agree with Arthur Hertzberg. But one must respect
the insight and scholarship, the passion and the conviction, which make him such a formidable intellectual opponent.


A constant refrain among those who chronicle the history of contemporary American Jewish life is that “there are no more giants in American Jewish life.” Where are the Louis Marshall, the Louis Brandeis, the Stephen S. Wise, and the Abba Hillel Silver of the 1950s to the 1990s?

Unless they have lived in a cave for the past four decades, these individuals should not have needed to ask such a question.

Philip M. Klutznick has more than amply filled the job-description of an American Jewish giant. The subtitle of his memoir is no printing error. He has lived a number of lives—in law, in city government, in real estate development, in federal government service on both the domestic and international sides, and in international Jewish leadership. No more giants in American Jewish life? Phillip M. Klutznick may have been the most gigantic of them all.


This fine annual, which ceased publication for a number of years, has achieved its former level of excellence under the editorship of Deborah Dash Moore. The 1991 version contains four most interesting essays on Sholem Aleichem in America.


In 1967, the African-American writer Harold Cruse shocked much of liberal American Jewry when he wrote in his important and
Brief Notices

provocative book, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* that "among the many myths life and history have imposed on Negroes is the myth that the Negro's best friend is the Jew. . . . The American Negro must seriously reassess his relationship with American Jews" (pp. 480 ff.).

More than a quarter of a century has passed since Harold Cruse called for a reassessment of the historic relationship between American Jews and African-Americans. Today, Black students on university campuses across this nation listen to lectures on Jewish exploitation of Blacks from the slavery era to the present by revisionist historians and read publications like the Nation of Islam's recent 300-plus-page book, *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews*, which in its 1275 footnotes cites the leading historians of the American Jewish experience and unfortunately sometimes distorts their findings on the role of Jews in the American slave trade.

The revisionists who today interpret the historical relationship between Blacks and Jews allege that Jews enriched themselves by clamping millions of Africans in irons and delivering them to plantation owners, many of whom were Jewish. They allege that Jews were responsible for allowing demeaning images of Blacks to be portrayed in the Hollywood film industry, and they charge that Jews have "used" their involvement in the struggle for civil rights as a means of securing their own aims and goals without really concerning themselves with the political and economic needs of the African-American community.

William M. Phillips, Jr. is too much of a legitimate scholar to follow this line of revisionist thought. His book is, instead, a very perceptive overview of nearly a century of Black-Jewish relations in the United States. The American Jewish community does not emerge without its share of criticism, but it is backed by Phillips's often outstanding analysis of what went wrong. Although it suffers from a wordiness that is a kind of "thick description" overkill, anyone who wants to understand the rise and fall of this relationship should consult *An Unillustrious Alliance*. 
1991

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American Jewish Archives

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The American Jewish Archives is pleased to announce the publication of four new additions to its "Brochure Series of the American Jewish Archives." They are numbers XI–XIV:

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