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Jewish Bankers, Russia, and the Soviet Union, 1900–1940: The Case of Kuhn, Loeb and Company.

Priscilla Roberts

pp. 9–37

This article describes the evolution of the relationship between the leading Jewish bank, Kuhn, Loeb and Company, and the Russian state from 1900 to 1940. Until 1917 the firm’s patriarch, Jacob H. Schiff, took an entirely hostile view of tsarist Russia, the result of its persecution of Jewish subjects. Schiff’s influence was instrumental in raising American finance for Japan during the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 and in the abrogation in 1911 of the long-standing Russo-American commercial treaty. During the First World War Schiff refused to allow his firm to participate in any Russian war financing, an attitude that changed only with the tsarist regime’s fall in 1917. Kuhn, Loeb’s initial euphoria over the Russian Revolution quickly turned to hostility when the Bolsheviks came to power. During the 1920s and 1930s, however, a rapprochement occurred and Kuhn, Loeb partners, particularly Felix M. Warburg, worked closely with the Soviet government on the Agro-Joint Project, which resettled Russian Jews on agricultural land in the Crimea. In the late 1920s Warburg also attempted to resolve outstanding issues of contention between the Soviet Union and the United States government. Throughout this period, however, the influence that Kuhn, Loeb could exert on either Russian or Soviet policy remained limited.

Decline in an Age of Expansion: Disappearing Jewish Communities in the Era of Mass Migration.

Lee Shai Weissbach

pp. 39–61

Even though the half century after 1880 was a period of tremendous growth and development for American Jewry, not every Jewish community in the United States was expanding in that era. A few smaller Jewish centers that had been established by immigrants from Central Europe and that had flourished in the latter part of the nineteenth century went into decline. This study identifies thirty Jewish communities
that had achieved triple-digit populations and created vigorous communal institutions before the turn of the twentieth century but that nonetheless fell on hard times during the era of mass migration. It relates the essential history of these communities, and it considers how and why they deteriorated in an era of general expansion.

"Training men and women in dignity, in civic righteousness, and in the responsibilities of American citizenship": The Thought of Rabbi Abram Simon, 1897–1938.

Marc Lee Raphael

Histories of Reform Judaism do not have entries for "Progressive Movement," "Progressivism," or "Progressive Era," although by the 1910s many Reform rabbis were calling themselves Progressives and a new political party by that name had formed to embody reformist principles. Historians date the Progressive Era between 1895 and 1920 and identify a series of movements aimed at renovating or restoring American society, its values, and its institutions. This article looks at one Progressive Reform rabbi, Abram Simon, and suggests the themes of progressivism extended through the 1920s.

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To Our Readers...

Over the past half century, *American Jewish Archives* earned its reputation as a distinguished scholarly journal on the history of the American Jewish experience. The man most responsible for this remarkable achievement is none other than the journal's venerated founder and long-standing editor, Jacob Rader Marcus. With the help of several extremely talented and devoted associates, specifically Selma Taeubler, Bertram W. Korn, Stanley F. Chyet and, most recently, Abraham J. Peck, Dr. Marcus transformed his biannual "bulletin" into one of two major journals devoted to the entire length and breadth of the American Jewish experience. Today, *American Jewish Archives* remains a valuable resource for the study and preservation of American Jewish history.

In the inaugural issue of *American Jewish Archives*, Dr. Marcus set forth a brief rationale for having the American Jewish Archives publish its own journal:

In order to inform the interested public and co-workers in the field of American history of our progress and activities, we will publish a semi-annual bulletin: including lists of our more important accessions and, in each issue, at least one article of scientific caliber.

The mission that Dr. Marcus outlined one-half century ago still endures. His vision will remain our lodestar; his academic standards will be our touchstone. With this commitment and in this spirit, we pause at this particular juncture to note the changing of the editorial guard and, consequently, the beginning of a new chapter in the history of this journal.

We are pleased to make note of several new developments that are intended to betoken the advent of some new editorial initiatives: first, our readers will note that the name of the journal has been amended slightly but significantly. This change has been made in order to make a clear distinction between the name of our institution and its journal. This serial will henceforth be known as *The American Jewish Archives Journal*.
Second, we are proud to announce the establishment of the Academic Advisory and Editorial Board. The members of this board will provide the journal’s editors with counsel relative to the journal’s academic content. Together with the journal’s editors, the board members will evaluate articles being considered for publication. The board will also advise the editors in matters concerning the journal’s publication policies.

Third, The American Jewish Archives Journal will once again re-dedicate itself to its long-standing interest in publishing annotated documentary source material. In the present volume, for instance, we are featuring the publication of two annotated translations of significant German and Hebrew documents. Simultaneously, the journal will continue to fulfill its original mandate by informing “the interested public and co-workers in the field of American history of our progress and activities” and by publishing scholarly articles and book reviews that we expect will be of interest to our readers.

We are also introducing, with this edition of our journal, a new cover design and layout style. It is our hope that this new graphic format will make this journal’s noteworthy content ever more accessible to our loyal readers.

The aforementioned modifications notwithstanding, the journal’s core purpose remains unchanged. The agenda that Dr. Marcus delineated fifty years ago will remain this journal’s primary raison d’être:

We seek to ascertain the facts as they actually are; and we desire to promote the study of materials that will further a knowledge of the American Jew, not only for the purpose of understanding this present period in the millennial history of the Jewish people, but also so that we may grasp the ethos of Americanism and thus make another contribution to the history of humanity.

G. P. Z.
Cincinnati, Ohio
July 1999
Jewish Bankers, Russia, and the Soviet Union, 1900–1940: The Case of Kuhn, Loeb and Company

by Priscilla Roberts

The relationship between American Jews and both tsarist Russia and its successor, the Soviet Union, was rarely trouble free. In the early twentieth century tsarist Russia was widely perceived as the fountainhead of anti-Semitism, an outlook that led American Jews to oppose commercial ties with and loans to the tsarist government and to advocate that their own government take even stronger action to combat Russian mistreatment of the Jews. The overthrow of Nicholas II’s government in 1917 and its replacement by the short-lived Provisional Government brought a brief interval when American Jews hailed with euphoric enthusiasm the dawning of a new era.

The emergence of the Bolshevik regime brought a period of much greater complexity, one well exemplified in the changing attitudes of the most prominent Jewish banking house in the United States, Kuhn, Loeb and Company. From 1917 at least throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Kuhn, Loeb and its assorted partners were all frequently accused of pro-Bolshevik sympathies. In the 1920s this was a standard charge leveled at Jewish bankers by anti-Semitic critics in the United States and Europe. During the First World War, this accusation carried additional overtones of pro-Germanism and disloyalty to the Allied cause, due to the widespread belief that the Bolsheviks were German puppets whose real aim was to expedite a German victory by taking Russia out of the war. Suggestions that Kuhn, Loeb, particularly its senior partner, Jacob H. Schiff, had secretly financed the Bolshevik revolution complemented both the belief that the firm was pro-German and the fear that all Jews were radicals bent on overthrowing the social order, a viewpoint that seemed to be substantiated by allegations that most of the Russian Bolsheviks were Jewish. Such a decidedly capitalist institution as Kuhn, Loeb might appear an unlikely home for left-wing tendencies. Even so, British and French
officials, American conservatives, Russian émigré organizations, and anti-Semites such as Henry Wickham Steed, the editor of the British Daily Mail, justified their fears by asserting that Schiff, his partner Felix Warburg, and other Jewish bankers had made loans to the Bolsheviks in exchange for valuable financial concessions in Russia. By contrast, more recently historians have suggested that after World War I the fear of the spread of Bolshevism throughout Europe and even to the United States motivated American officials, bankers (prominent among them the Kuhn, Loeb partners), and other leading Americans to support their country’s greater involvement in European affairs, to promote Europe’s economic recovery and political stabilization, and to favor American membership in the League of Nations and other international organizations. The reality was more complex and reveals an interesting series of attempts to reconcile ideological opposition to communism with American Jewish bankers’ realistic tendency to accept the existence of and even work with a noncapitalist Russian regime.

In the first four decades of this century Kuhn, Loeb was one of the leading financial institutions of the United States, a private investment house second only to J. P. Morgan and Company in its prestige and the scope of its operations. Its partners were all of German-Jewish extraction, generally related to each other by blood or marriage, a traditional pattern in the network of Jewish international banking firms that linked all countries from Central Europe to the United States. The firm specialized in railroad finance, though it handled a wide variety
of other business. Much of its eminence in the New York financial world derived from its ability to tap not only American investment capital when it floated issues of securities but also the resources at the command of foreign banking houses.

Until his death in 1920, Kuhn, Loeb’s dominant figure was Jacob H. Schiff, who emigrated to the United States from Germany in the late nineteenth century, joined the then rather lackluster Kuhn, Loeb firm, married the senior partner’s daughter, and quickly became the bank’s leading partner, building it up to the eminence it enjoyed in 1919. An austere figure, he gave heavily to charity and was considered in New York, if not in the United States, the senior Jewish lay leader, a position in which he also exerted considerable political influence. He took his duties to the Jewish community seriously and often used his political connections and prestige to promote the interests of Judaism in the United States and overseas.

Schiff’s other partners were rather more worldly. His suave and polished son Mortimer joined the family firm under considerable pressure from his father and never attained his senior’s stature as a banker, instead generously patronizing the Boy Scouts, the racetrack, and numerous ladies of somewhat doubtful virtue. Schiff’s son-in-law, Felix M. Warburg, was a scion of the famous banking family of Hamburg associated with the bank M. M. Warburg and Company. One of five brothers, he had not been destined for a career in banking, but when he met, wooed, and rather against Schiff’s paternal misgivings, won Schiff’s only daughter Frieda, his father-in-law insisted that he move to the United States and join the family business. Never an outstanding banker, Felix Warburg threw himself into a wide variety of charitable activities, par-
particularly devoting most of his considerable energies to the administration of Jewish philanthropic and communal organizations, especially the Federation for the Support of Jewish Philanthropic Societies of New York, the umbrella organization that coordinated the activities of all Jewish charities in New York, the American Jewish Committee, and the later Joint Distribution Committee. While his father-in-law still dominated the firm, such activities on behalf of the Jewish community won Felix at least his grudging respect.9

Three other partners gave Kuhn, Loeb rather more solid underpinning. In the 1890s Paul M. Warburg, Felix's elder brother, married Nina Loeb, the half-sister of Jacob Schiff's wife, and arranged to spend approximately half his time in Germany as a partner of his own family firm, M. M. Warburg and Company, and half in New York as a Kuhn, Loeb partner, an arrangement that continued until 1914, when he became a director of the newly established Federal Reserve Board. Paul was a genuine banking intellectual. For many years he campaigned tirelessly for the establishment of an American central bank, a crusade that ultimately contributed much to the creation in 1913 of the U.S. Federal Reserve System. He was also an enthusiast for the expansion of U.S. international banking activities, particularly through the introduction of acceptance financing, the provision through the banking system of a form of credit for foreign commercial transactions. Paul hoped that ultimately New York would become a financial center that would rival London and give the British a run for their money. Unlike his rather lightweight brother, Paul Warburg won the genuine respect and affection of the formidable Jacob Schiff, and despite their difference in age the two men became close friends.10

The more flamboyant Otto H. Kahn, the cadet of a Mannheim banking family who shared an apartment with Paul Warburg in London when the two were apprentice bankers in the 1880s, also took the traditional route into the firm, marrying a partner's daughter in 1896. One of the most generous patrons of the arts in U.S. history, for
many years he was chairman of the Metropolitan Opera, which he helped to build up into a New York institution. Despite his outside interests, Kahn still had sufficient energy to become one of the firm’s dominant partners, taking a particular interest in railroad financing. The only nonfamily member of the firm was the “hardest working of the partners,” Jerome J. Hanauer, who worked his way up from the position of office boy. Quiet, with few if any outside interests, Hanauer was described by his son-in-law as “of all the financiers I have ever known... the only one who was never wrong on any business question where he was willing to state a judgment.” He concentrated on the business of banking and making money and features little in this essay.

While most of Kuhn, Loeb’s partners were somewhat lukewarm in their Jewish allegiances, Jacob Schiff was quite different. Far more devout than his younger partners, he was a solid pillar of Reform Judaism, observing what his nephew described as “a strange mixture of orthodoxy and ritualistic liberalism he had concocted for himself.” Schiff was deeply conscious of the responsibilities of his position as one of the most prominent Jews in the United States, and he felt it his duty publicly to identify himself with his co-religionists. He regularly protested against any instance that came to his attention of discrimination in hiring Jews. Though less devout, Schiff’s son-in-law, Felix Warburg, inherited his mantle as one of the American Jewish community’s leading laymen and philanthropic figures.

From the 1890s onward, Schiff was deeply concerned by the plight of foreign Jews, especially those of Russia and Eastern Europe. He and Felix Warburg directed many of their efforts to alleviating the conditions of the Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe who in the late nineteenth century flooded into New York’s lower East Side in the hundreds of thousands. Jacob Schiff and Felix Warburg were both important patrons of the United Hebrew Charities, the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society, the Baron de Hirsch Fund, the Hebrew Free School Association, and the Educational Alliance, all of which attempted to aid these immigrants in adjusting to their new country.
The Schiffs and Warburgs all took an especially close personal interest in the affairs of the Henry Street Settlement, one of the pioneers and leaders of the American settlement house movement. Lillian D. Wald, Henry Street's competent and determined head, was a friend and not merely a beneficiary of Kuhn, Loeb's partners who, on their part, greatly admired her efforts to improve the conditions of New York's poor of all faiths.17

Historians of Jewish immigration have claimed that the established and well-to-do German Jews of the United States resented the late-nineteenth-century influx of ill-educated and somewhat outlandish Russian and East European immigrants and that they feared the latter would lower the status of all American Jews, themselves included. At least in part, it is alleged, their philanthropic efforts among the new arrivals were self-serving attempts to force them to conform to American norms and to assimilate these potentially disruptive elements into American society.18 These suggestions may well have some foundation. Certainly, those organizations that the Kuhn, Loeb partners supported often attempted to "Americanize" the new immigrants, instill in them loyalty to the United States and respect for its prevailing Anglo-Saxon heritage of ideology, culture, and customs, and teach them the English language.19 Nonetheless, the practical help that these institutions gave the newly arrived East European immigrants was often valuable. Moreover, language instruction and some insight into American ways were often important assets for Jewish immigrants, particularly in an era when the special problems of ethnic minorities attracted little, if any, sympathy or consideration. It is worth noting that, although Jacob Schiff strongly advocated the dispersal of Russian-Jewish immigrants into the South and West, rather than concentrating them in overcrowded New York City, he always uncompromisingly opposed any attempts to restrict the flow of Jewish immigrants into the United States.20

Schiff brought pressure to bear upon the American government to use its influence to ameliorate the suffering of Jews in other countries. As early as 1890, he and other prominent American Jews inconclusively discussed the problems of their foreign co-religionists with James E. Blaine, the Secretary of State.21 In the early 1900s, the anxieties of American Jewish leaders mounted steadily. The Romanian government forced its Jewish subjects to live under harsh social and economic restrictions, a policy in direct contravention of the Treaty of Berlin, which Romania had signed in 1878. The tsarist government
also became increasingly repressive: the Kishinev massacre of 1903, in which forty-seven Jews were killed and hundreds injured, was soon followed by pogroms on a much greater scale.\textsuperscript{22}

Schiff and other Jewish leaders were driven to sponsor public protest meetings, measures that they had hitherto feared might be counterproductive. They conferred with President Theodore Roosevelt and Secretaries of State John Hay and Elihu Root, demanding that the president indicate his anger over these events by sending an official message to Congress and that the United States make formal diplomatic protests to the Romanian and Russian governments. Late in 1905 Schiff even suggested that Roosevelt employ military force against Russia.\textsuperscript{23} Particularly when reminded of the strategic importance of the Jewish vote, the Roosevelt administration was not entirely unsympathetic. In 1902 Secretary Hay sent the Romanian government an official note remonstrating against the discriminatory treatment of its Jewish subjects. Copies of this note were dispatched to all the powers who had signed the Treaty of Berlin.\textsuperscript{24} In 1903 the American government offered to forward to its Russian counterpart a petition protesting against the Kishinev massacre, and in 1906 Roosevelt attempted to intercede with Russia on behalf of its Jewish subjects.\textsuperscript{25} At Schiff's urging, the Roosevelt administration also prevailed upon the representatives of all the great powers gathered at the 1906 Algeciras Conference to pass a resolution demanding equality of treatment for the Jews of Morocco.\textsuperscript{26}

In general, however, the American government's efforts encountered only intransigence and indifference. By 1906 Roosevelt, weary of Russian snubs and his government's impotence to improve European Jewry's lot, found Schiff's repeated appeals that he take further action on the matter somewhat irritating and his suggestions that the United States should forcibly intervene in Russian domestic affairs entirely impractical.\textsuperscript{27}

There was one tangible way in which the American government could indicate its distaste for Russia's anti-Semitic policies. By denying entry within its borders to all Jews, even those who held American passports, Russia regularly disregarded its Commercial Treaty of 1832 with the United States.\textsuperscript{28} During election campaigns Roosevelt, his successor President William Howard Taft, and their Democratic opponents all received suggestions from Schiff that they incorporate public protests against this practice into their party platforms and major speeches and policy statements. Generally they obliged, albeit with
some qualifications. From around 1907 onward, Schiff and the recently established American Jewish Committee, whose aim was to use all feasible means to alleviate the sufferings of East European Jewry, went so far as to urge the complete abrogation of the 1832 treaty, even though some American exporters would almost certainly lose business thereby. Roosevelt remained tactfully but encouragingly noncommittal; the less astute Taft refused outright to support the abrogation movement. (Schiff’s deep annoyance over Taft’s initial hostility toward abrogation, a measure that Woodrow Wilson, by contrast, publicly advocated, almost certainly played a substantial role in his 1912 support for the Democratic presidential candidate.) Following a determined campaign by American Jewish leaders and organizations, in 1911 Congress nonetheless passed resolutions unilaterally terminating the treaty, and the Taft administration then endorsed these. After the agreement’s abrogation, Schiff continued to oppose any suggestion that it be renegotiated before the passport question should have been settled to American Jews’ satisfaction.

Kuhn, Loeb’s position as a major financial house was an equally and perhaps even more important source of leverage on Russia. Possibly the most important pre-1914 foreign issues in which Kuhn, Loeb participated were five loans to the Japanese government during and immediately after the Russo-Japanese War of 1905. Schiff’s motives in handling this business were by no means purely financial. His distaste for the anti-Semitic policies of Russia’s tsarist government was so intense that he refused to allow Kuhn, Loeb to participate in any Russian loans, and he begged British and European Jewish financiers to impose a similar embargo. Schiff hoped that a Russian defeat at the hands of Japan might lead to a revolution and the installation of a liberal constitutional government, one that would cease to discriminate against Russia’s five or six million Jewish subjects. His assistance and support were instrumental in enabling Japan’s special financial commissioner, Baron Takahashi Korekiyo, to overcome American and British bankers’ initial lack of interest in Japanese war bonds. Kuhn, Loeb organized the New York syndicates that handled the American portions of the successive Japanese war loans, all of which were heavily oversubscribed. Moreover, Schiff was more than ready to mobilize the services of his many European contacts, especially M. M. Warburg and Company, to sell the continental issues of these securities. This, in turn, was a vital factor in persuading British financiers to handle Japanese war bonds on favorable terms.
Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). Seated from left to right are: Louis Marshall, Felix M. Warburg, of Kuhn Loeb & Co., chairman of the committee; Rabbi Aaron Teitelbaum, corresponding secretary; Mrs. F. Friedman, official stenographer; Dr. Boris D. Bogen of Cincinnati, organizer of the branch of the JDC in Holland and a director of the National Conference of Charities; Leon Saunders, president of the Independent Order of B'nai B'rith; Harry Fischel, treasurer of the Central Relief Committee (CRC); Sholem Asch, noted Yiddish writer and vice chairman of the People's Relief Committee (PRC); Alexander Kais, PRC chairman; Jacob Milch; Miss Harriet Loewenstein, a lawyer and JDC comptroller; Colonel Moses Schoenberg of St. Louis; Rabbi M. Z. Margolies, president of Agudas Habonim; Israel Friedlander of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York; Paul Baerwald, associate treasurer of JDC and member of the firm of Lazard Freres; Julius Levy of Baltimore; Peter Wiernik, CRC chairman and editor of the Jewish Morning Journal, New York; Meyer Gilais, assistant editor of the Forward, New York; Colonel Harry Cutler of Providence, chairman of the Jewish Welfare Board, U.S. army and navy; Cyrus Adler, president of Dropsie College, Philadelphia, and of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, and chairman of the American Jewish Relief Committee of Philadelphia; Arthur Lehman, treasurer of the committee and member of the firm of Lehman Brothers, Bankers, New York; Jacob H. Schiff, philanthropist and international banker.

Standing left to right are: Abraham Zucker of PRC; Isadore Hershfield, who visited the war zones at the outbreak of the war to establish communication between Jewish families in Europe and America; Rabbi Meyer Berlin, CRC vice president; Stanley Bero of CRC; Louis Topky of Wilmington, Delaware; Morris Engelman, CRC financial secretary and the originator of the plan for the American Relief for the Jewish War Sufferers.

(American Jewish Archives)
Eventually $535,000,000 of such securities, of which the United States took $196,250,000, were floated on European and American markets; they covered more than half of Japan’s total war costs and were probably a vital factor in Japan’s military success.36

During the First World War, Kuhn, Loeb would once again refuse to lend to Russia and, by extension, to any of the Allies. Hostility to Russia helped to reinforce the undoubted pro-German leanings of some, though not all, of Kuhn, Loeb’s partners. With his long history of opposition to the tsarist regime, Jacob Schiff was naturally contemptuous when patriotism or fear of retaliation led English Jews to refuse to condemn their Russian ally’s treatment of their co-religionists.37 Indeed, he argued that, though deplorable, German atrocities in Belgium, which attracted so much condemnation in Western Europe and the United States, were far less appalling than the tsar’s brutal persecution of the Jewish population of western Russia and Poland.38

During the war, Schiff and Felix Warburg, as chairmen respectively of the finance committee of the American Jewish Relief Committee and of the Joint Distribution Committee, became heavily involved in efforts to alleviate Jewish distress due to the war, notably in Russia, Poland, and Galicia.39 In these endeavors they often called upon the assistance, financial and otherwise, of German bankers, relying particularly upon Max Warburg, the elder brother of Paul and Felix and head of their family firm of M. M. Warburg and Company, which was heavily involved in financing the German war effort.40

By summer 1915 the Allies were desperately short of U.S. dollar exchange with which to pay for the enormous amounts of American war supplies they were purchasing. With the assistance of J. P. Morgan and Company, they raised a loan of $500 million in the United States, the first of several.41 Although several of his partners wished their firm to participate in this offering, Jacob Schiff refused to permit it. Before he would allow his firm to take any of the Allied bonds, Schiff demanded binding written assurances from the British and French governments that none of the proceeds would in any way be used to aid Russia. Lord Reading refused to give these guarantees. Schiff forthwith announced that Kuhn, Loeb would continue its existing policy of abstention from governmental financing for any belligerent nation. He stated that in principle he supported the loan but that his long-standing aversion for the tsarist government prevented his firm’s participation.42 Among the Allies and their supporters, though, Schiff’s
stand was widely regarded as proof that he favored Germany and, as it was reported he had in 1914 told a *London Times* correspondent, was "willing to help the Kaiser rather than the Allies." To some extent this accusation was true, but Schiff's pro-German tendencies should not lead one to underestimate the strength of his continuing opposition to the Russian government. As long as the tsar sanctioned anti-Semitic policies, Schiff refused to lend money to "this most hated and inhuman of rulers." A few weeks after the Anglo-French loan's flotation, Schiff apparently told the Russian cabinet, through the agency of Louis Marshall, the president of the American Jewish Committee, and Alexandre Guenzburg, a leading Russian Jew, that if the tsar would grant his Jewish subjects full civil rights, he would immediately raise $200 million for Russia. The proposal was rejected, though knowledge of it led Germans to condemn Schiff for subordinating his German to his Jewish loyalties. In view of Schiff's continuing skepticism over the possibility of changes in the tsarist government's attitude, one might plausibly wonder whether he had genuinely expected this suggestion to receive serious consideration.

Schiff probably found opposing the investment of American capital in Russian securities and enterprises more congenial. From early 1915 onward he condemned the notion of any such financing until Russian Jews were freed from all disabilities. In January of that year he endorsed the protests of the prominent Jewish leader Louis Marshall to President Wilson and Secretary of the Treasury William G. McAdoo against a $25 million credit that several American banks planned to extend to Russia. With Schiff's approval Paul Warburg, now a member of the Federal Reserve Board, likewise attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to exclude acceptance credits for the Russian government from rediscount by Federal Reserve Banks, a measure that would have made such securities unappealing to American banks. In late 1915 Schiff claimed to Max Warburg that he had privately dissuaded several American banks and trust companies from participating in a large Russian credit of this nature. Even so, the two biggest New York financial institutions, Morgan's and the National City Bank, remained impervious to his displeasure; in 1916 they headed syndicates that floated two $50 million loans for the Russian government, while some American banks still handled Russian acceptances. Publicly and privately, Schiff roundly condemned all such transactions, denouncing Russian loans as financially unsound and moral-
Paul Warburg, normally a keen supporter of the expansion of American foreign investments, not only disparaged this financing but also deplored American businessmen's increasing interest in other Russian enterprises. He characterized all such activities as risky and insecure, alleging that in order to obtain American funds the Russians had virtually falsified their national accounts. In any event, the Russian Revolution fulfilled Warburg's forebodings, though not, perhaps, precisely as he had anticipated. At the time, however, the Russian war loans seemed sound investments, and unlike most American offerings for the Allies they were heavily oversubscribed. One suspects that Warburg's pro-German and anti-Russian leanings may well have affected his financial judgment.

Not until March 1917, when American intervention was obviously virtually inevitable, did Kuhn, Loeb formally abandon its self-styled policies of "absolute neutrality" and abstention from "doing or participating in any financing for belligerent purposes." Publicly, the partners claimed that their policy reversal was due solely to the Russian Revolution, an event that cleansed the Allies of the taint of anti-Semitism. This explanation was perhaps somewhat disingenuous. For Kuhn, Loeb to refrain from supporting the U.S. government at a juncture when war against Germany seemed virtually inevitable would have been uncharacteristic and, to put it mildly, impolitic. The skeptical comment of prominent banker Frank A. Vanderlip that "the revolution in Russia... at least was the very fortunate occasion for Mr. Schiff to withdraw his opposition to Allied financing" to the annoyance, he noted, of Morgan's, "who have been bearing the burden [of this business] thus far" was not entirely unjustified.

Even so, one need not doubt that to committed leaders of the American Jewish community, particularly Jacob Schiff and Felix Warburg, the Russian Revolution of 1917 initially seemed to promise a long-awaited and welcome end to the oppression of Russian Jews. As so often on matters involving Jewish issues, Jacob Schiff was the most vocal of the partners. Initially he, like most American Jews, was optimistic over Russian developments, enthusiastically supporting the new Provisional Government. The delighted Jacob Schiff welcomed the revolution, which he hailed as "almost... a miracle... almost greater than the freeing of our forefathers from Egyptian slavery." He sent congratulatory telegrams to the new Russian leaders, served on a reception committee for the Russian mission that visited the United
States later that year, and gave the Provisional Government concrete support in the shape of substantial subscriptions to Russian governmental bond issues. He applauded the decree of April 6, 1917, removing all existing disabilities from Jews in Russia. Schiff rebutted charges that the new government was as anti-Semitic as its predecessor. He urged the American government to extend financial aid to the Provisional Government to enable it "to continue in the fight against absolutism." In a public statement, Schiff also called for massive private American capital investment in Russia, arguing that an "American Russian financial alliance" would be to the "benefit of both countries." In April 1917 Schiff set an example of his commitment to this idea when he personally subscribed to 1,000,000 rubles of a Russian government loan. At his government’s request, in April 1917 Schiff also urged Russian Jews to persuade the Provisional Government, already under domestic pressure to make a separate peace with Germany, to remain in the war, warning that otherwise American financial aid might not be forthcoming. To him, the end of Romanov rule initially seemed "like a miracle," though he did confess to being "still a bit anxious that all may not go as smoothly as we hope, and that there may be some upheaval yet in Russia."

The Bolshevik revolution of November 1917 more than confirmed such misgivings, precipitating a swift and dramatic change in Schiff's attitude toward Russia. Far from being enthusiastic Bolshevik supporters, Kuhn, Loeb's partners viewed these radical revolutionaries with deep suspicion. To some extent the opposition of the Schiffs and Felix Warburg was muted by the need to work with whatever authorities held power in Russia to promote the Joint Distribution Committee's relief efforts there. Even so, there is no doubt that both Jacob Schiff and Otto Kahn were convinced anti-Bolsheviks who would have much preferred a restoration of the provisional Lvov or Kerensky government and did what little lay in their power to further this aim. Schiff refused to give the Bolsheviks any financial aid and in December 1917 even requested the return of the million rubles he had loaned the Russian government earlier that year, a demand the Bolsheviks simply ignored. Schiff himself accepted the theory that the Bolsheviks were German agents and hoped that, "once freed from the Bolshevik [sic] German terror," Russia would "resume its march toward real democracy." He believed that the United States should not make peace with Germany until the latter had given up what he believed to
be its control over Russia. Allegations that the Bolsheviks were mostly of Jewish origin particularly alarmed him, coming as they did at a time when radical American Jews were already under attack for being antiwar and unpatriotic. He feared that, because several prominent Bolsheviks were Jews, both the Russian peasantry and the Americans would believe that Jews generally supported the Bolsheviks and their policies. He attempted to persuade the American Jewish Committee to counter such claims through publicity. Organizations such as the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society constantly sent Schiff information alleging that the Bolsheviks were anti-Semitic and, while he thought some such complaints exaggerated, on the whole he believed them. By contrast, both Schiff and Felix Warburg initially discounted suggestions that the White Russians, under Admiral Aleksandr Kolchak’s regime in Siberia, treated Jews under their jurisdiction with equal brutality.

Schiff, Kahn, and Felix Warburg did not merely passively oppose the Bolsheviks but also supported strongly anti-Bolshevik organizations within the United States. Schiff was most deeply involved in such activities. In May 1917 he became an honorary adviser to the Russian Information Bureau (RIB), an agency originally established by the tsarist government in 1916 and soon afterward taken over by its provisional successor. Throughout the change of regimes this body professed the same aim: "to furnish the American public with information in regard to the industrial, commercial and cultural conditions in Russia," thereby, it hoped, promoting Russian-American goodwill and understanding. After the Provisional Government’s fall the RIB became a center for anti-Bolshevik propaganda, for several years propagating the belief that the Bolsheviks were tools of Germany and advocating American and Allied military intervention to overthrow the Bolsheviks and restore the provisional regime. According to Zosa Szajkowski, the RIB was "a very efficient anti-Bolshevik press agency, advocating the cause of [the White Russian leaders] Kolchak and [General Anton] Denikin, giving advice to American official and private individuals, predicting a quick end of the Soviet regime, and criticizing every possible attempt to normalize the political or economic relations between the United States and Bolshevik Russia." It was financed partly by the Provisional Government’s continuing Russian embassy in Washington, but from late 1917 onward it was increasingly bankrolled by wealthy conservative Americans, among them
several leading Jews, including Schiff, Marshall, the noted economist Edwin R. Seligman, the diplomat and former United States Secretary of Commerce Oscar S. Straus, and the Zionist Stephen S. Wise. All were honorary advisers of the bureau, whose director, Arkady Joseph Sack, was himself a Russian Jew. The energetic Sack attempted to bring about an alliance between Kolchak’s White Russian forces and leading American Jews, appealing to the former to moderate their anti-Semitism and telling the latter that reports of White Russian pogroms and other anti-Semitic atrocities were much exaggerated.

For several years Schiff and other Jewish leaders extended substantial financial support to the RIB and its weekly news-sheet, Struggling Russia. Indeed, Schiff described this publication as “possibly the most powerful agent in this country possessed by those who are struggling so hard to bring about in Russia the peace it and the entire World needs so greatly and which cannot be attained to the full until orderly conditions under a permanent democratic government become there established.” Schiff not only gave handsomely himself but approached other prominent American Jews, such as Julius Rosenwald, for funding on its behalf. Until his death, Schiff received numerous letters and press releases from Sack, all of which he acknowledged and on which he usually commented. Yet like other prominent members of the Joint Distribution Committee, the American organization that coordinated Jewish relief efforts in Europe and was chaired by his son-in-law, Felix M. Warburg, Schiff became increasingly alarmed by incontrovertible reports that Kolchak’s and Denikin’s White Russian forces were anti-Semitic and had committed numerous atrocities against Russian Jews. Both Schiff and Felix Warburg were initially reluctant to credit these allegations, but the evidence for them became increasingly strong. In July 1919 Schiff told Sack that he had received “reliable reports... that conditions in the territories under the sway of the Omsk Government are most unsatisfactory (to use a mild expression) as far as the Jews are concerned.” He cited instances in which White Russian organizations had “incite[d] the populace into atrocities against the Jewish population” and even acquiesced in murder. He suggested that Sack therefore “transmit a word of warning” to his “friends in Siberia” that such behavior would “alienate the sympathies of the American people.” Sack’s only defense was to try to characterize the Omsk government as the least unappetizing of the available alternatives.
Sack's efforts reaped some success. In late July 1919 a group of conservative Jewish leaders, including Schiff, Marshall, Straus, and Wise, conferred with the Russian Metropolitan Archbishop Platon of Kherson and Odessa. According to later reports of this meeting, they assured the archbishop that the majority of American Jews strongly opposed Bolshevism, and one source alleged that they even offered to lend Kolchak $5 million. Whatever their misgivings as to the Kolchak government, many Jewish leaders were still on friendly terms with its representatives. When news of this meeting leaked out, however, it elicited a storm of protests from more radical, often Yiddish-speaking, American Jews. More conservative American Jews, generally those of German origin, continued to support the White Russians. In November 1919, Schiff stated publicly: "We must aid those who battle against the forces of anarchy in Russia."

Schiff also supported the 1918-19 Allied military intervention in Russia, an enterprise in which the United States government, in collaboration with Britain, France, and Japan, rather halfheartedly attempted to weaken and if possible overthrow the Bolshevik regime. While Woodrow Wilson's administration was far less anti-Bolshevik than the other Allies, the Bolsheviks not unnaturally regarded its activities as unfriendly. Schiff hoped that the Allied and American forces would trigger the fall of the Bolsheviks. In October 1919 he told Sack:

If we do not come to the aid of the elements in Russia who so heroically battle to subdue the forces of disorder and anarchy, who for the time have constituted themselves the Russian Government and make it possible that, instead of this, a truly democratic Government which alone can become the salvation of Russia, be established, the present regime, which cannot possibly remain permanently, will surely be followed by reactionary rule, most likely as undesirable as that of the Romanoffs was, whose autocracy brought such misery and suffering upon the Russian people.

He dismissed those who attacked the RIB as "elements, who appear to consider the existing state of anarchy and disorder in Russia a healthy condition, which they desire to become permanently established not only in Russia, but similarly all over the world." In a November 1919
issue of *Struggling Russia*, Schiff repeated his assertion that: "We must aid those who battle against the forces of anarchy in Russia."\(^{64}\)

By late 1919, even Schiff and his fellows were becoming convinced of Kolchak’s fierce anti-Semitism.\(^{65}\) Schiff warned Sack that he had "incontrovertible documentary evidence... that the most brutal and cruel murders have been practised against the Jewish people all along the territory under the sway of the Kolchak regime and that these horrid deeds have been directly called forth through army orders." He begged Sack to do "something to counter-act this."\(^{66}\) It was, however, hardly surprising that by 1920 Schiff’s views on Russia were tinged with uncertainty. In February 1920 he told Sack: "The whole situation is so very complex that it is most difficult to find a proper way through it and out of it, and I can see naught but to trust to time that light may come out of darkness."\(^{67}\) "All we can do," he had suggested a month earlier, "is to attentively and carefully follow events and consider from day to day what can, and should be done to better the outlook in Russia and Siberia."\(^{68}\) In his opinion the Russian situation was intimately linked to the "Russian-Jewish problem" and the two would have to be settled together.\(^{69}\) Meanwhile, he felt that the Bolshevik arrest of Zionist leaders in Moscow on charges of being Allied agents made it desirable that he and other leading Jews should not be publicly associated with the RIB.\(^{70}\) He confessed that at times the complicated Russian situation "very considerably upset" his nerves.\(^{71}\) Even so, until his death in September 1920, Schiff continued to support the RIB financially, in May pledging $5,000 of the $21,000 needed for the continued publication of *Struggling Russia*.\(^{72}\) Soon afterward the end of Allied intervention and the Bolshevik victory in the Russian civil war meant that the RIB lost most of its financial support, whereupon it promptly collapsed.\(^{73}\)

While Schiff was probably Kuhn, Loeb’s most active anti-Bolshevist, other partners also tried to combat what they perceived as the menace of Bolshevism and radicalism. In the 1920s the staunchly antiradical Felix Warburg provided funding for David Dubinsky’s efforts to remove communists from the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.\(^{74}\) Otto Kahn likewise found the Bolshevik revolution unsympathetic, and early in 1918 he expressed the hope that "some men may arise soon in that distracted country with the force and courage to unite the elements of order, honor and sanity against the powers of liberty run mad, which now hold sway."\(^{75}\) He was one of the
founders of American Russia Relief, a strictly anti-Bolshevik relief organization. In March 1919 he gave a dinner at his home, attended by, among others, Theodore Roosevelt, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Felix Warburg, and Mortimer Schiff, whose purpose was to discuss methods of dealing with Bolshevism. In Kahn's case, fervent domestic anti-socialism intensified his fears of Bolshevism. He was one of those American businessmen most perturbed by what he saw as the domestic unrest and socialism that the war had provoked. He contributed to such vehemently antiradical organizations as the League for National Unity and was most insistent that the wartime government direction of business must cease immediately after the war did.

According to one conservative source, in 1920 Kahn, a nonobservant Jew much attracted to Roman Catholicism, even said "that it wouldn't do any harm to have a little anti-Semitic feeling get about, and take the conceit out of some of those Jews who have come over here recently and are trying to run the country." At this time Kahn frequently spoke out publicly against all radical and socialist activities, helping to whip up public opinion to the frenzy known as the "Red Scare" of 1919, and he contributed financially to several antiradical organizations.

Kahn, the American Warburg brothers, their German siblings, and Dr. Karl Melchior, another partner in M. M. Warburg and Company, all tried to argue that if the Allies did not treat Germany leniently and extend financial aid to Europe, Bolshevism might well win control of all of Europe, particularly Germany. After the First World War, particularly during the 1920s, Paul Warburg, now chairman of the International Acceptance Bank, and his former partners in Kuhn, Loeb were among those American bankers most committed to American participation in efforts to revive Europe's devastated economy and restore financial and political stability. They called for the reduction or cancellation of reparations and war debts, took part in the Dawes Loan and other loans intended to facilitate European economic recovery, and extended numerous credits for the purchase of American goods, particularly favoring German-based enterprises. In these endeavors they often worked closely with M. M. Warburg and Company as well as other European banks.

Yet by the 1920s, when Kuhn, Loeb's efforts to revive the European economy were at their height, the partners' fears of the spread of communism had largely dissipated. By 1922 Kahn felt that Bolshevism no longer appreciably threatened Eastern and Central Europe.
mid-1920s he and the Warburgs were even taking a certain relaxed
interest in developments in the Soviet Union. Kahn went so far as to
sponsor the 1922–23 American tours of the Moscow Art Theatre,
defending the actors against charges that they were communist spies
or agents. Unlike many American businessmen, Kahn and Paul
Warburg came to support the eventual resumption of trade relations
with Russia, whose granaries might, they hoped, contribute to
Europe's recovery. Between 1921 and 1922 Kahn switched from
opposing American trade with the Soviets to supporting the opening
of commercial, though not diplomatic, relations with them. By 1932
he was "the only individual financier of world prominence" to be a
member of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, which by
1926 likewise favored resumption of trade relations between the two
countries and by 1933 supported the reopening of diplomatic rela-
tions. Kahn's atypical posture may have owed something to the fact
that, unlike J. P. Morgan and Company and other New York banks,
which had lent heavily to the Russian government during the First
World War, Kuhn, Loeb's exposure to defaulted Soviet loans was lim-
ited.

Meanwhile, Felix Warburg, whose principal interest after the First
World War was not European reconstruction but the relief of world
Jewry, went further even than his brother or his partner. In 1924 the
Joint Distribution Committee, of which he was chairman, negotiated
a pact with the Soviet government under whose terms an initial 500
Russian bourgeois Jews, who could no longer practice their old trades
under Soviet rule, were resettled as farmers in the Crimea. The JDC's
support for this project, known as Agro-Joint, was at least partially due
to the passage in the United States of the 1924 Reed-Johnson
Immigration Act, which severely curtailed further potential Russian
Jewish immigration to the United States. Faute de mieux, American
Jewish leaders were therefore forced to negotiate with the Soviet
authorities; it seems possible that they had at least tacit State
Department approval and perhaps encouragement in this enterprise,
which could provide American officials at least some information on
conditions within the Soviet Union. Approximately half of Agro-
Joint's funding, $5,000,000, came from the millionaire Julius
Rosenwald, head of Sears Roebuck; and the Rockefeller Foundation
gave $500,000. Felix Warburg munificently donated $1,000,000, while
the less affluent Paul contributed $50,000. Although estimates vary
considerably, perhaps 125,000 Russian Jews were relocated to agricul-
tural settlements in the region during the 1920s and 1930s, even
though from the mid-1930s onward the project experienced substanc-
tial difficulties with and harassment from Soviet authorities and ended
tragically in 1941-42, when Adolf Hitler invaded the area.\textsuperscript{109}

Agro-Joint’s American Jewish sponsors were aware that even at
the scheme’s peak Soviet treatment of their co-religionists left much
to be desired. Yet, when asked to comment on Soviet persecution of
Jewish rabbis, Felix Warburg stated that, deplorable as he found such
behavior, it must be remembered that through Agro-Joint the Soviet
government was also helping Russian Jews to regain their economic
independence.\textsuperscript{110} Warburg went further and tried to bring about a
Soviet-American rapprochement, unsuccessfully encouraging the
Soviet leader Alexei Rykov to cease anti-American propaganda and
pay the Kerensky government’s debts to the United States.\textsuperscript{111} By 1929
he favored recognition of the Soviet government on the pragmatic
grounds that it had “lasted, in different forms, for over twelve years”
and that, from his discussions with Soviet leaders, it seemed likely to
evolve in the direction of capitalism.\textsuperscript{112} By 1933 Warburg even hoped
that a syndicate of American banks might be able to set up an “out-
post” in Berlin, utilizing their frozen German credits and collateral to
acquire the name and expertise of the two private German banking
He blithely hoped that the new institution’s American character
would protect it from “the harassing [sic] and hindering influences of
the Hitler Government,” thus attracting a large German and Jewish
clientele, and that it would also concentrate on the Russian business
that recent American recognition of the Soviet Union had opened to
American bankers.\textsuperscript{113}

Overall, it is hard to argue either that the practical and ideological
desire to combat Bolshevism was the strongest reason impelling
Kuhn, Loeb’s partners to support an expanded American international
role in Europe, or that the firm’s members were dedicated friends of
the Soviet government. One can argue far more plausibly that the ties
that bound Kuhn, Loeb’s partners to Europe, particularly their links,
both institutional and personal, with Germany, were important in
leading them to advocate American loans to Europe and in some cases
American membership in the League of Nations, as well as disarm-
ament, the World Court, and the cancellation of reparations and war
debts. Kuhn, Loeb’s gradual rapprochement with the Soviet govern-
ment probably owed much to the partners' realistic appreciation that the regime, however little they approved of it, was unlikely to collapse in the near future, and to a perception shared by many other prominent Americans that under the New Economic Policy Lenin and Stalin were moving in the direction of capitalism. In addition, the partners' Jewish roots and the eagerness of at least the Warburgs to establish Jewish agricultural settlements helped to reconcile them to a regime they had once vehemently opposed.

When one surveys the dealings of Kuhn, Loeb's partners with both the tsarist regime and its Soviet successor, and even the White Russians, one is struck by their inability to exert anything but the most marginal leverage on either government. Despite the radical change of ideology, over forty years the relationship between Kuhn, Loeb and the Russian government was one in which much remained remarkably unchanged. In pronounced contrast to the vehement rhetoric common at the time as to the pernicious influence that Jewish international bankers enjoyed, one finds that when dealing with autocratic powers mere financiers, however well connected, found themselves relatively powerless.

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NOTES
4. Ibid., 2: 7, 74, 154, 157, 161, 167.
5. See Arno J. Mayer, Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking: Containment and


12. Strauss, Men and Decisions, 84; proof of article on Hanauer, April 2, 1928, Box 28, Lewis L. Strauss Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa;
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13. J. Warburg, Long Road Home, 10–11; Adler, Jacob H. Schiff, 2: 44–47.
19. Handlin, Adventure in Freedom, 156–57; Rischin, Promised City, 98–103.
24. Best, To Free a People, 50–60; idem, "Jewish 'Center of Gravity,'" 28–33; Adler, Jacob H. Schiff, 2: 153–54.
29. Schiff to Roosevelt, July 31, August 7, 1904, Series 1, Roosevelt Papers; Roosevelt to Schiff, August 5, 1904, Series 2, ibid.; Schiff to William Howard Taft, July 20, 24, August 3, 1908, Series 3, William Howard Taft Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress; Taft to Schiff, July 21, 31, 1908, Series 8, ibid.; Best, To Free a People, 74–75, 101–03, 171–72; Cohen, Not Free to Desist, 57; Goldstein, Politics of Ethnic Pressure, 43; Adler, Jacob H. Schiff, 2: 145–47.
30. Best, To Free a People, 169–84; Cohen, Not Free to Desist, 57–69; Goldstein,
Politics of Ethnic Pressure, 142–46; Adler, Jacob H. Schiff, 2: 147–49.


32. Schiff to Wilson, March 25, 1915, Wilson to Schiff, April 1, 1915, Series 2, Wilson Papers; Best, To Free a People, 198–200, 208; Cohen, Not Free to Desist, 78–80; Goldstein, Politics of Ethnic Pressure, 162–83.


35. Best, To Free a People, 93–94; idem, "Financing a Foreign War," 315; Adler, Jacob H. Schiff, 2: 117–22.


38. Schiff to Herman Bernstein, February 16, June 8, 1915, Box 442, Schiff Papers; Schiff to D. Soberheim, November 24, 1915, Box 446, ibid.


40. See the correspondence between Schiff and Max Warburg in Box 440, Schiff Papers, and Box 171a, Felix Warburg Papers.


44. Quotation from Schiff to William D. Guthrie, October 6, 1915, Box 443, Schiff Papers; see also Schiff to Oswald Garrison Villard, February 5, 1915, Box 446, ibid.; Adler, Jacob H. Schiff, 2: 250-53; Best, *To Free a People*, 250-53.


46. See, e.g., Schiff to G. Wilenkin, September 23, 1914, Box 441, Schiff Papers; Schiff to Herman Bernstein, March 5, 1915, Box 442, ibid.; Best, *To Free a People*, 208. One should, however, note that Schiff appears to have believed that whether by revolution or evolution is not clear, the war would “bring about the removal of the pale of settlement and other Jewish disabilities.” Schiff to Cyrus L. Sulzberger, October 13, 1915, Box 444, Schiff Papers.


49. Schiff to Max M. Warburg, November 23, 1915, Reel 695, Schiff Microfilms.


55. Quotation from Schiff to Philip Schiff, April 6, 1917, Box 461, Schiff Papers; see also A. J. Sack, cablegram to Petrograd, April 13, 1917, Schiff to Count Ilya Tolstoy, May 9, 1917, Schiff to Jacques Seligmann, May 17, 1917, ibid.; Schiff to Paul Milyukov, March 19, 1917, Milyukov to Schiff, April 8, 1917, Box 462, ibid.; Schiff to David Lubin, April 25, 1917, Schiff to D. G. Lyon, April 26, 1917, Box 458, ibid.; material in Russia File, Box 468, ibid.; *New York Times*, April 18, 24, 26, May 10, 13, 1917; Adler, Jacob H. Schiff, 2: 254-58; Best, *To Free a People*, 214-16.

57. Schiff to Alfred A. Knopf, June 12, 1917, Box 458, Schiff Papers.

58. Schiff to Charles A. Howland, April 23, 1917, Box 457, ibid.; A. J. Sack to Petrograd, April 13, 1917, Box 461, ibid.

59. Schiff to Charles A. Howland, April 23, 1917, Box 457, ibid.

60. Schiff to Boris Kamenka, April 23, 1917, Box 468, Schiff Papers; Adler, *Jacob H. Schiff*, 2: 256–57.


62. Schiff to D. G. Lyon, April 26, 1917, Box 458, Schiff Papers.

63. Schiff to Kamenka, December 27, 1917, January 18, 1918, Kuhn, Loeb to Banque de Commerce de l’Azoff Don, January 18, 1918, Kamenka to Schiff, September 19, 1918, Box 467, Schiff Papers; Schiff to Sack, May 6, 1920, Box 470, ibid.

64. Schiff to Sack, October 11, 1918, Box 468, ibid.

65. Schiff to Lord Swaythling, September 30, 1918, Box 469, ibid.

66. Schiff to Marshall, August 19, 1918, Box 467, ibid.; Schiff to Julius Rosenwald, June 3, 1920, Box 470, ibid.

67. Schiff to Marshall, September 30, 1918, Box 469, ibid.

68. See, e.g., Samuel Mason to Marshall, June 10, 1918, Box 467, ibid.; Mason to Schiff, November 25, 1918, Schiff to Mason, November 26, 1918, Box 465, ibid.

69. Schiff to Sack, October 17, 1919, Box 187, Felix Warburg Papers.

70. E. B. Schatsky to Schiff, April 30, 1917, Schiff to Schatsky, May 1, 3, 1917, Box 461, Schiff Papers.


73. Schiff to Sack, October 6, 1919, Box 187, Felix Warburg Papers.

74. Schiff to Rosenwald, June 3, 1920, Box 470, Schiff Papers.

75. See the A. J. Sack Files, Boxes 461, 468, and 470, in Schiff Papers, and Box 187, Felix Warburg Papers.


77. Schiff to Sack, July 7, 11, 1919, Box 187, Felix Warburg Papers.

78. Sack to Schiff, July 16, 1919, ibid.


80. Ibid., 32–33.

81. Quoted in ibid., 193.

82. Accounts of this episode are given in Kennan, *Decision to Intervene*;
Unterberger, *America's Siberian Expedition.*

83. Schiff to Sack, October 6, 1919, Box 187, Felix Warburg Papers.
85. Ibid., 32–33, 97–98.
86. Schiff to Sack, December 4, 1919, Box 187, Felix Warburg Papers.
87. Schiff to Sack, February 7, 1920, Box 470, Schiff Papers.
88. Schiff to Sack, January 26, 1920, ibid.
89. Schiff to Sack, January 12, 1920, ibid.
90. Schiff to Sack, May 19, 1920, ibid.
91. Schiff to Sack, February 7, 1920, ibid.
92. Schiff to Sack, May 6, 1920, Sack to Schiff, May 7, 1920, ibid.
95. Kahn to Gregory Wilenkin, January 16, 1918, Box 92, Otto H. Kahn Papers, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.
97. Ibid., 193.
98. For Kahn's fear of Bolshevism and radicalism in the United States at this time, see Kahn to M. G. Gunsberg, October 17, 1917, Box 79, Kahn Papers; to William T. Hornaday, November 23, 1917, to M. E. Hutchinson, October 10, 1917, Box 80, ibid.; to Charles W. Ames, April 2, 1918, to F. G. R. Gordon, November 22, 1918, Box 100, ibid.; to John T. Milliken, December 19, 1918, Box 103, ibid.; to B. Perrin, November 15, 1918, to Allen Walker, August 8, October 7, 14, 1918, Box 110, ibid.; Matz, *Many Lives of Otto Kahn,* 192. For his views on governmental direction of the economy, see Kahn to F. C. Bray, December 20, 1917, Box 73, to Joseph de Grott, April 10, 1917, Box 76, ibid.; to Louis Brandeis, August 12, 1918, Box 95, to James Dunning, December 5, 1918, to A. C. Murphy, January 25, 1918, Box 103, to American Telephone and Telegraph Company and similar letters he sent to other large corporations, February 13, 1918, Box 105, all in Kahn Papers; Kahn, "The Menace of Paternalism," September 27, 1918, in *Reflections of a Financier: A Study of Economic and Other Problems* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1921), 146–83.
100. Kahn to A. H. Alden, December 29, 1919, Box 111; to Jacob D. Cox, May 20, 1919, to Grosvenor Clarkson, November 29, 1919, to L. T. Crabtree, April 11, 1919, to W. A. Curtis, January 15, December 1, 1919, all in Box 114; to George W. Harris, April 11, 1919, to Archibald Hopkins, February 24, March 10, July 1, 1919, Box 118; to Leigh H. Irvine, October 9, 1919, Box 119; Warren G. Harding to Kahn, February 21, 25, 1919, Kahn to Harding, February 24, 1919, Box 122; Kahn to Francis R. Welsh, October 31, November 1, December 28, 1918, January 2, February 5, October 29, 1919, Box 128; to Eric Broberg, September 10, 15, 1920, Box 140, Kahn Papers.


103. Kahn to Sir Philip Lloyd–Graeme, August 31, 1922, Box 179, Kahn Papers.


107. Kahn to Peter, January 17, 1921, Box 161; to Parker, January 31, 1921, Box 159, both in Kahn Papers; Wilson, Ideology and Economics, 88.


110. Bauer, My Brother’s Keeper, 102.


113. Warburg, memorandum, December 19, 1933, Box 303, ibid.
Decline in an Age of Expansion: Disappearing Jewish Communities in the Era of Mass Migration

by Lee Shai Weissbach

The half century or so after 1880 was a period of tremendous growth and expansion for American Jewry, due primarily to the massive migration of East European Jews to the United States. Between 1880 and the mid-1920s, the Jewish population of the United States expanded from about a quarter of a million people to more than 4.2 million, and the number of individual Jewish communities in the country climbed dramatically in that period as well. In the late 1870s, there were 26 cities and towns in the United States with Jewish populations of 1,000 or more and another 135 with Jewish populations of at least 100 but less than 1,000. By 1927, however, the number of U.S. cities with Jewish populations of 1,000 or more had climbed to nearly 200, and there were about 500 triple-digit Jewish communities in the country as well.

The growth and development of a great many of the nation's smaller Jewish centers reflected the expansion of American Jewry more generally. Of the 135 triple-digit Jewish communities that existed around 1878, for instance, nearly half had achieved populations of more than 1,000 by 1927, and some of the examples of communal growth in this period were quite spectacular. The Jewish population of Minneapolis went from 172 to 22,000 between 1878 and 1927, while the Jewish population of Indianapolis rose from 400 to 10,000 and the Jewish population of Denver went from 260 to 17,000.

The same general pattern of growth in small communities is evident if the first decade of the twentieth century is taken as the base period. In 1907, there were approximately 240 cities and towns in the United States that were each home to at least 100 but less than 1,000 Jews, and these communities had an average Jewish population of around 300. By 1927, however, the average Jewish population in these places had risen to just over 1,000.1

Still, not every Jewish center established in the United States by the turn of the century was expanding in the era of mass migration, for while the overall Jewish population of the country was burgeoning,
while most individual Jewish communities were growing, and while new Jewish centers were being established in scores of small towns throughout the United States, there was a simultaneous but little-noticed countercurrent in American Jewish demography as well: throughout the country, a few of the small but significant Jewish communities that had flourished in the latter part of the nineteenth century or in the first few years of the twentieth went into decline, and a few disappeared completely.

In order to draw attention to this phenomenon and explore the history of those well-established small Jewish communities that deteriorated in an era of general expansion, this study will consider two specific sets of communities that can be identified in the available data. One of these is the set of communities that had reported Jewish populations of 100 or more in the late 1870s but whose Jewish populations had dropped permanently below 100 by the first decade of the twentieth century; the other is the set of communities that had reported Jewish populations of 100 or more around 1907 but whose populations had dropped permanently below triple digits by 1927. The thirty specific communities that fit these criteria are listed in tables 1 and 2.²

As the tables indicate, three of the triple-digit American Jewish communities that existed in the United States around 1878 had vanished entirely by the beginning of the twentieth century, and one of the American Jewish communities that was home to over 100 souls around 1907 had disappeared completely by 1927. Among the surviving communities listed in table 1, the Jewish population dropped about 59 percent on average between 1878 and 1907,³ and among the surviving communities of table 2, the Jewish population dropped about 67 percent on average in the two decades after 1907.⁴

In order to understand the history of those American Jewish communities that fell on hard times in the era of mass migration, we should begin with the observation that during the periods in which these communities were flourishing, there was little to indicate what their fate was to be. For one thing, most of these communities got their start in much the same way as the nation's more enduring Jewish centers: they began with the arrival of a few Jews seeking economic opportunity in a developing city or town, and they became established as some of these early arrivals settled down and as other immigrants joined them.
The first Jews to locate in Madison, Indiana, in the middle of the nineteenth century came as that town was becoming an important pork processing and market center on the Ohio River, for example, and the arrival of Jews in La Porte, Indiana, was tied to its importance as the main gateway between the southern parts of the state and the Great Lakes region of Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan. The attractiveness of Goshen, Indiana, stemmed from its position as a major center of Mennonite and Amish populations, and it was bolstered by the creation of the Mennonite Church's Goshen College in 1903.5

In Louisiana, Jews were attracted to Donaldsonville because of its role as a hub of the local sugar and rice trade; and Crowley's position in a rice-producing region helps explain the development of a Jewish community there as well. Keokuk, Iowa, attracted Jewish settlers because it was a substantial town emerging at a spot where, until a canal was dug in 1877, goods being shipped on the Mississippi River had to be off-loaded to circumvent twelve miles of rapids that blocked steamboat navigation.6

In Michigan around the turn of the century, Jews were attracted to the company town of Calumet because it was the base of operations for a fabulously productive network of copper mines, and they located at Crystal Falls because it was growing as a service center within both the Menominee Iron Range and an important lumbering region. Lumbering also led to the development of Tupper Lake, New York, and made it an appealing place for Jews to settle.7

Out West, the development of a Jewish community in Woodland, California, was related to that town's location in a rich agricultural area where experiments in irrigation had been started as early as 1856, while the settlement of Jews in Eureka and Virginia City, Nevada, and in Leadville, Colorado, was tied to the discovery of silver in those places. Gold strikes were what made Helena, Montana, and later Cripple Creek, Colorado, attractive places for Jewish settlement.8

As was the case with many of the more enduring Jewish centers in the United States, railroads often played a role in the initial formation of the communities that are under consideration here. The lure of Madison, Indiana, for example, was enhanced by the completion of a railroad link between that town and Indianapolis in 1847, and what helped bring Jews to Ligonier, Indiana, was its position as a stop on the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad. Donaldsonville, Louisiana, became a destination for Jews in part because the Texas and
Pacific Railroad passed through the town, while the Illinois Central ran by it on the opposite side of the Mississippi River. The coming of the railroad also was significant in the creation of the Jewish communities of Pocahontas, Virginia, and Tupper Lake, New York. Pocahontas became the first town in the coal region that straddles the Virginia-West Virginia border to be served by trains when the Norfolk and Western Railroad reached there in 1883, and around 1890 Tupper Lake became the terminus of the New York Central Railroad, which was later extended to Montreal.9

Another way in which the communities that concern us here seemed to be typical is that kin connections and chain migration played an important role in their early development. In 1854, for example, Frederick William Straus arrived in Ligonier, Indiana, as one of that town's first Jewish inhabitants, and by 1860 he had brought his brothers Mathias and Jacob from Germany to help him in his business there. Similarly, among the earliest Jewish settlers in Madison were about two dozen members of the Brandeis-Dembitz clan that had arrived by a circuitous route from Prague. In Helena, Montana, the sixty-one members of the town's Jewish congregation in 1889 bore only forty-six different surnames.10

Occupational patterns in our small Jewish centers were typical, too. For the most part, these communities were made up of merchants and small-scale entrepreneurs and their families and employ-
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ees, and it was often the case that the business people who were the foundation of these communities had started out as peddlers. For instance, while there were no Jewish peddlers in Ligonier, Indiana, when the census of 1900 was taken, the census of 1860 had revealed that of the ten local Jewish households, four were headed by merchants, three by clerks, and three by peddlers.11

Around 1880 in Eureka, Nevada, there were seventeen dry goods or clothing firms owned by Jews, along with nine food or grocery businesses, seven stores dealing in tobacco, stationery, and books, and five stores selling general merchandise. Eureka also counted five Jewish tailors, three restaurateurs, three saloon keepers, and a few additional Jews providing a variety of other goods and services. In Helena in 1890, of the eighty-three Jews employed outside the home, twenty-three were merchants in clothing or dry goods, thirty-two were clerks or managers, seven were pawnbrokers, and five were in the liquor or tobacco trade.12

All this is not to say, however, that every one of the Jewish householders in the communities we are examining made a living in the local "main street" businesses, for in several of these communities Jews invested in real estate, and there were also some who were linked in one way or another to the more specialized aspects of the local economy. In nineteenth-century Eureka, Ben C. Levy, a local fire insurance agent, was also at various times a mining superintendent and a mine executive, and in Leadville, Colorado, Levi Z. Leiter was part-owner of the highly successful Oro Mining Ditch and Fluming Company. In Helena, Julius and Morris Sands began with a dry goods business but branched out into mining and cattle, and in the same city S. H. Bohm owned a quarter share of the El Dorado Mine, which he acquired using funds he had apparently embezzled from the Seligman Company of San Francisco, the backer of Bohm's banking enterprise in Montana. In Ligonier, several Jews were land brokers, and at least two of the town's early Jewish families became involved in the construction of buggies and carriages, a significant local industry in northern Indiana and southern Michigan at the turn of the century.13

Occasionally, our towns were also home to Jews engaged in manual labor. In Leadville and Cripple Creek some tried their luck at prospecting and others worked for wages in the mines, and in Northumberland, Pennsylvania, somewhat uncharacteristically, the bulk of the Jewish population consisted of laborers who had migrated
from New York City to work in the local cap-making industry. Of course, in having some Jewish residents who were not involved in the usual business pursuits of small-town Jews, our Jewish centers were typical as well.14

The Jews who settled down in the various towns that appear in tables 1 and 2 must have felt that they were establishing a permanent Jewish presence in their cities, for all these places were population centers of at least some local significance, and even those towns in the West that grew up because of gold or silver strikes were far from being rough-and-tumble mining camps. Leadville was for a while the second largest urban center in Colorado, for example, and Cripple Creek was a city where miners commuted to their jobs by streetcar. The city directory of Helena boasted in 1895 that the town "possesses all the luxuriant and comfort-giving qualities of the older cities of the East."15

One indication that the Jewish residents of the communities we are exploring were indeed thinking in terms of a secure future is that, like their co-religionists in other places, they developed Jewish institutional structures along familiar lines. A few examples from the communities of table 1 will serve to illustrate. In Columbus, Mississippi, where German and Alsatian Jews were already settling by the 1830s, the local Jewish community organized congregation B’nai Israel perhaps as early as 1845, and it purchased a cemetery in 1850. In Madison, Indiana, the Jews organized Adas Israel in 1853 and in 1855 they dedicated a synagogue on the second floor of a commercial building owned by the community’s purveyor of kosher meat. Shortly thereafter, the congregation purchased land for a cemetery and employed as the community’s first teacher Bernard Felsenthal, later to be a leading Reform rabbi in Chicago and an important figure in national Jewish life.16

In Keokuk, the B’nai Israel congregation was organized around 1855 and it erected Iowa’s first synagogue building in 1877, while in Donaldsonville, congregation Bikur Cholim was organized in 1856 and acquired a synagogue building in 1869.17 Indeed, all twelve of the communities listed in table 1, except Saint Francisville, Louisiana, had functioning Jewish institutions of one sort or another before 1880, and Saint Francisville finally saw the establishment of a congregation around 1892.18

In much the same way, the triple-digit communities listed in table 2 also saw the development of an active Jewish communal life. In the
first decade of the twentieth century, at least one congregation was functioning in all of these communities except Pocahontas, Virginia, and in Pocahontas regular services were held on the Sabbath and holidays despite the absence of a congregational body. Moreover, around 1907, fifteen of the communities in Table 2 were maintaining their own cemeteries, at least twelve were providing some formal Jewish education for their young people, and at least ten were home to lodges of the fraternal order B'nai B'rith. Indeed, in some cases the Jewish institutions of the communities in Table 2 had been in existence for several decades by the beginning of the twentieth century.

As early as 1859, for example, the Jews of Owensboro, Kentucky, had organized a mutual benefit and burial society, and by 1877 they had established congregation Adath Israel and erected a temple. The year 1859 also saw establishment of congregation Gemiluth Chassed in Port Gibson, Mississippi, and that assembly purchased a cemetery in 1871 and erected a wonderfully exotic temple in 1892. In Ligonier, Ahavath Achim had been founded in 1865 and had built its first synagogue in 1871. That building was replaced by a more elaborate brick structure in 1889, and by the turn of the century Ligonier also boasted a Jewish social club, whose facilities included a ninety-foot ballroom, lounges, a bar, and a card room.

The exotic 1892 synagogue of congregation Gemiluth Chassed in Port Gibson, Mississippi, built when the Jewish community there was at its peak.
(Courtesy of the author)
The 1870s had seen the founding of B’nai Israel in Eufaula, Alabama, and of Shearith Israel in Goshen, Indiana, and the acquisition of vacant church buildings by both these congregations for use as synagogues. The Montefiore congregation that served the Jews of Cairo, Illinois, was only about thirteen years old in 1907, but it was the successor to an even earlier congregation, Benai Israel, which had been organized during the Civil War and had established the town’s Jewish cemetery.21

Out West, a Hebrew Benevolent Association had been organized in Helena, Montana, in 1866, and this body was transformed into congregation Emanu-El in 1889. That optimistic congregation dedicated a 300-seat temple in 1891 with a sanctuary designed so that it could be expanded to seat 500. In Leadville, the Hebrew Benevolent Association established in 1878 had evolved into Temple Israel by 1884, and in that same year the congregation had built its synagogue. By 1892, Leadville also had seen the establishment of Kneseth Israel, an Orthodox congregation intended to serve the needs of those who were not comfortable with Temple Israel’s Reform orientation. Jonesboro, Arkansas, was also home to two congregations by the turn of the twentieth century, an apparently unnamed Orthodox body established in 1892 and a Reform congregation, Temple Israel, organized four years later.22

If the presence of Jewish institutions in the various communities listed in tables 1 and 2 was one indication of their apparent vitality, another was the attention they got from the Industrial Removal Office, the organization established at the turn of the century to relocate Jews from the densely populated cities of the East to other Jewish centers throughout the country. The IRO evidently considered most of the towns we are examining to be places with bright prospects for Jewish
settlers, for in the years between 1901 and 1910 it sent individuals and families not only to fifteen of the eighteen communities listed in table 2, but even to six of the twelve communities listed in table 1, Jewish centers that were already on the wane by the first decade of the twentieth century.

What is it, then, that sent the seemingly robust Jewish communities that we are examining into decline even as most American Jewish centers were growing or at least achieving a certain stability? The answer, not surprisingly, has a lot to do with local economic conditions. Because these Jewish communities were composed primarily of merchants and storekeepers, they could survive only where the local economy was vigorous and could provide a substantial market for the wares of businessmen such as dry goods and clothing retailers, furniture store owners, liquor and tobacco dealers, and grocers. What happened in almost all those towns where the Jewish community went into decline in the last decades of the nineteenth century or in the first decades of the twentieth was that the local economy took a decided downturn, drying up the local consumer market and undermining the business environment.

The clearest examples of this phenomenon come from towns that were built on extractive industries such as mining or oil drilling, for here the general economic pattern tended to be one of boom and bust. The substantial Jewish communities of these towns were established in the boom periods, as Jewish tradesmen and merchants arrived to cater to a burgeoning population, but these communities tended to disappear when the bust came, as the local markets for goods and services dissipated. A case in point is the community of Franklin, Pennsylvania. Like several other oil towns in the northwestern part of the state, Franklin prospered for only a decade or so before the area's deposits of oil were depleted and more productive wells were sunk elsewhere. Moreover, Franklin's economy suffered from a drop in oil prices that came in 1880. Consequently, Franklin's Jewish population, which stood at 131 around 1878, was not even recorded in the early years of the twentieth century and was reported to be only 34 in 1927.

The pattern observable in Franklin can also be seen in the gold and silver mining towns of the West, where the death of a Jewish community sometimes reflected the complete ruin of the city in which it was located. Thus, the communities of Eureka and Virginia City,
Nevada, with Jewish populations in the late 1870s of 172 and 305 respectively, were gone entirely by the turn of the century, just as Eureka and Virginia City themselves became virtual ghost towns.25

Less dramatically, but in much the same way, the fate of most of the disappearing Jewish communities of the era of mass migration was tied to the economic health of the towns in which they had become established. In Madison, for example, the decline of Jewish life mirrored the diminishing role of Ohio River ports in Indiana and the growth of Indianapolis as the state’s premier urban center. Similarly, Keokuk’s Jewish community went into decline as Mississippi River traffic became relatively less important and as the expansion of the railroads shifted Iowa’s commercial center further west.

In some cases, specific incidents that adversely affected the economy had a direct bearing on the fate of the local Jewish community. In Cripple Creek, a long and violent strike by the Western Federation of Miners that ended in 1904 helped destroy the viability of the city’s Jewish community, as did a similar work stoppage by the same union in Calumet, Michigan, in 1913, during which seventy-three wives and children of striking miners were killed in a Christmas Eve panic set off when someone (perhaps an agent of the mine owners) yelled "fire" in a crowded assembly hall.26

Also implicated in the destruction of Cripple Creek’s Jewish community was a devastating fire that ravaged the town’s business district in 1896, just a few years before the debilitating mine workers’ strike there. And in Northumberland, Pennsylvania, the end of the Jewish community came when the Seff and Lauterstein cap factory burned down in 1909 and the Jewish cap workers who had been employed there moved back to New York.27

Local population trends are perhaps the best indicators of the deteriorating economic situations of the towns in which the nation’s dying Jewish communities were located. In 1880, the average population of the towns listed in table 1 was 6,157, but in the next twenty years the average population of these towns grew only 21 percent.28 By contrast, the most successful triple-digit communities in the states represented in table 1 were in towns where the population grew 208 percent on average between 1880 and 1900.29 Similarly, the towns listed in table 2 had an average population of 6,972 in 1910, but in the next twenty years the average population of these towns grew only 8 per-
cent, with eight of the towns actually losing population in that period of time. By comparison, the most successful triple-digit Jewish communities in the states represented in table 2 were in towns where the population grew an average of 70 percent between 1910 and 1930. What these figures suggest, in other words, is that local Jewish population trends tended to correspond to those of the larger society; declining Jewish communities were generally to be found in towns where the total number of residents was more or less stagnant or perhaps even dropping.

Still, the population history of the declining communities we are considering is not simply a story of individuals and families moving on when the economy took a downturn, for in at least some of these communities many of the original settlers remained in place even as the local economic situation soured. In Madison, Indiana, for instance, of the twenty-one early settlers identified as founders of the Jewish community, it seems that all but two died in their adopted city, and in Ligonier, of the twenty-five Jewish family names represented in the town in 1880, sixteen were still represented thirty years later, often by the same person. In Owensboro in 1922 there were at least seven men present who had been in town for thirty-six years or longer. These were substantial business people who had a strong economic incentive to remain: a vice president of the Owensboro Ice Company and the Owensboro Sewer Pipe Company, the president of a wholesale grocery firm, the owner of a hide and scrap metal business, the president of the Farmers' and Traders' Bank, and two brothers who were influential clothiers and investors in the city.

To be sure, the persistence of many members of the founding generation in their adopted cities could not guarantee the viability of their communities indefinitely, for aging and death eventually took their toll. Thus, what hurt the communities that concern us here more than the departure of some of their founders was the loss of their second generation. In Madison, for instance, it appears that only seven children of first-generation Jewish settlers established themselves permanently in their birthplace.

Moreover, even those Jews who remained in their towns were not always zealous for the perpetuation of local Jewish life. Some became highly assimilated and quite deliberately cut themselves off from local communal life, while others married non-Jews and raised gentile children. In Helena, Montana, for example, two members of the community declared specifically that they did not wish to become members
of congregation Emanu-El when it was founded in 1889, and in Donaldsonville, Louisiana, many Jews married local Catholic women of French or Spanish ancestry and "headed families in which the children were baptized and reared in the Catholic faith." In Ligonier, Indiana, there seem to have been three intermarriages before 1910 and at least four after that year, with the non-Jewish spouses often rejected by the small Jewish community that still existed in the town. In Madison, the most prominent local Jewish figure, Marcus Sulzer, married the daughter of a Baptist minister in 1893, and when she died he married her sister. Although Sulzer's son attended temple with his father on Friday nights as well as church with his mother on Sundays, he eventually became an Episcopalian.34

Ultimately, of course, the main thing that hindered the survival of our communities was the fact that they were unable to attract new settlers in any significant numbers. Unlike their more successful counterparts, these communities were left virtually untouched by the great wave of East European immigration that augmented the population of so many American Jewish centers and accounted for the creation of so many new ones.

In Madison, only five men living in the city in the last years of the nineteenth century can be identified as East European Jews, and, as the chronicler of Madison's Jewish history asserts, communication between "the newly arrived 'greenhorns' and their Americanized co-religionists" was "rare" and, in any event, "Madison's diminishing population and poor economic climate was probably reason enough for those [Eastern Europeans] who came to leave before they had time to be absorbed into the older community."35

In Ligonier, only four Jewish family names that had not been found in previous census listings were represented in 1910, and in that year there was only one family in town of East European "Yiddish" background. In Keokuk, there were enough East European newcomers present for a few years in the era of World War I so that Orthodox services were conducted in the vestry of the Reform B'nai Israel synagogue (Keokuk's Jewish population may actually have surpassed 100 again briefly during the war). These Eastern Europeans did not become rooted in the town, however, and by 1920 all activities at B'nai Israel had ceased and the building stood empty until it was sold to become the Keokuk Gospel Temple in 1927.36

Indeed, given the early deterioration of the communities we are
examining, it is remarkable how long some Jewish institutional life was perpetuated in many of them. The Jewish community of La Porte, Indiana, ceased supporting its B'ne Zion congregation in 1886 and decided to sell off its synagogue in 1898, at a time when sixteen heads of household in La Porte and ten supporters living elsewhere were still members in good standing of the congregation, but such resignation in the face of communal collapse was quite rare. Much more characteristic were attempts by at least some Jews who remained in declining communities to maintain a sense of optimism about the future and at least a vestige of Jewish communal life even as prospects for communal survival dwindled.

In Saint Francisville, Louisiana, for example, Temple Sinai dedicated a newly constructed synagogue building in 1902, just three years before the congregation stopped functioning, and in New Bern, North Carolina, congregation B'nai Sholem, established in 1895, still considered itself to be in existence as late as 1927, even though it was reported to have suspended religious services completely as early as 1907 and to be meeting for prayer only on “festivals” (perhaps meaning the High Holidays) in 1919.

In Goshen, Indiana, where the number of Jews was down to fifty-one by 1927, the town's Shearith Israel congregation did not disband until 1932, and the local Jewish Ladies Aid Society continued its activities for a number of years even after that. Moreover, the lay leader of the congregation, Harris Weinstein, continued to conduct services in Goshen on special occasions until his death in 1943. In Leadville, both the Reform Temple Israel and the nominally Orthodox Kneseth Israel continued to function until the 1930s; and congregation Emanu-El in Crowley, Louisiana, held on until 1938, when it merged with Rodeph Sholom in Lafayette, about ten miles away. In Eufaula, Alabama, B'nai Israel was still reported to be in existence around 1940, at a time when the town had only about two dozen Jewish residents.
Sometimes organized Jewish life in the struggling communities we are examining was revived only intermittently. For example, after a period of inactivity before 1890, the Bikur Cholim congregation of Donaldsonville underwent a reorganization, but already by the turn of the century a guide to local churches noted that the town's Jewish citizens "have no regular services" and that they only occasionally occupy their "very commodious and comfortable building." Bikur Cholim seems to have resumed weekly services again at some time before the 1930s, however, and High Holiday services continued to be held in Donaldsonville even after regular meetings ceased. The Bikur Cholim synagogue building was not sold until 1955.40

In Helena, no clergyman could be found to lead the congregation of Temple Emanu-El after the departure of its first rabbi, Samuel Schulman, and regular services there were suspended in 1898, just seven years after the building's dedication. Nonetheless, the community found a new rabbi in 1901 and retained someone in that post until 1917. Only in the 1930s did the remaining few members of Temple Emanu-El finally deed their building to the state of Montana. The community's cemetery association did not disband until 1943.41

Certainly one of the most tenacious of the communities that declined in the era of mass migration was that of Jonesboro, Arkansas, where as late as 1959 the town's Temple Israel congregation was able to construct a new synagogue building in a residential suburb. The survival of active Jewish life in Jonesboro was no doubt due in part to the existence in the 1930s and 1940s of the Arkansas Jewish Assembly, a statewide organization whose goal was to link and to nurture the various small Jewish communities scattered throughout the state. Perhaps the ultimate example of a refusal to acknowledge the disappearance of a community, however, comes from Keokuk, where B'nai Israel had dissolved by 1920 but where the only Jewish man in town in 1950 claimed that the congregation actually "still exists" because he and his two unmarried sisters still lived in
Keokuk and because he continued to care for the local Jewish cemetery.42

Despite the determination of some to maintain a communal identity for as long as possible, by 1927 no more than five of the twelve towns listed in table 1 were still reported to have congregations, and no more than eleven of the eighteen towns (listed in table 2). By 1960, congregations still survived in only one of the towns of table 1 (Columbus, Mississippi) and in only six of the communities of table 2. Of the towns being examined here, only Owensboro still has a surviving congregation as the end of the twentieth century approaches, and its position is quite precarious; in 1989, Adath Israel had only twelve member families, several of them including a non-Jewish spouse and the majority without children.43

The Adath Isreal temple in Owensboro, Kentucky, dedicated in 1877 and still in use by a tiny congregation a century and a quarter later.
(Courtesy of the author)

So what can be said by way of conclusion about the value of studying the two sets of Jewish communities we have examined here? First and foremost, focusing on these communities increases our understanding of American Jewish migration and settlement patterns in the era of mass migration by correcting the impression that the half century after 1880 was a period of uncompromised growth and development for American Jewry. Until now, the communities associated with the California gold rush of the mid-nineteenth century were just about the only ones whose premature demise has been noticed,44 and
the experience of those communities has been viewed as highly unusual. In general, the assumption seems to have been that any substantial small community that existed on the eve of mass migration or that flourished around the turn of the twentieth century must have prospered for many decades to come. This study suggests, however, that both communal development and communal decline were factors in American-Jewish demography during the period of mass migration from Eastern Europe.

Indeed, it is worth observing that the thirty communities examined in this study were selected by using very specific and somewhat arbitrary criteria (especially given the questionable accuracy of the available Jewish population data) and that these communities are actually representative of many more Jewish centers with similar population histories. There were, for example, several small Jewish communities in the United States that deteriorated in the early decades of the twentieth century but that were not discussed in this study because their Jewish populations did not fall permanently below 100 until the 1930s. These include the communities of Danville, Pennsylvania; Wabash, Indiana; Canton, Mississippi; and Trinidad, Colorado. There were also a number of early triple-digit communities that exhibited decline in the first half of the twentieth century but that were not considered here because they experienced a revival after World War II. These include communities in such places as Huntsville, Alabama; Key West, Florida; and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Beyond adding to our understanding of American Jewish migration and settlement patterns, this study also serves as a very powerful reminder of how crucial the local economic environment has been in the history of individual Jewish communities. This analysis demonstrates that even communities that were centers of some vitality early in their existence could not survive in places where growth was not sustained and where neither subsequent generations of established families nor new Jewish settlers could find economic opportunity. At the same time, however, this study also reveals the tenacity of those small-town Jews of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who strove to preserve a communal life under increasingly difficult circumstances.

Over the last few years, the popular press and other media have become fascinated by the death of many once vital small-town Jewish communities, especially in the South, but they have tended to treat
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this phenomenon as a fairly recent development. In the communities whose histories we have explored here, once thriving Jewish centers that went into decline seventy, eighty, or even one hundred years ago, we have discovered the precursors of the disappearing Jewish centers of late twentieth-century America.

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NOTES
A version of this essay was presented in Boston in December 1997 at the 29th Annual Conference of the Association for Jewish Studies.

1. Jewish population data for this study have been drawn primarily from the following sources: for c. 1878, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Statistics of the Jews of the United States (Philadelphia, 1880); for c. 1907, The Jewish Encyclopedia (New York, 1901–16), 12: 371–74, and the American Jewish Year Book (hereafter cited as AJYB) 9 (1907–08): 123–430; for 1927, AJYB 30 (1928–29): 180–96. In cases where the sources for c. 1907 give different Jewish population data for the same town, the two figures have been averaged; for a fuller discussion of these two sources, see Lee Shai Weissbach, “Small Jewish Communities in the Era of Mass Migration: The American Experience,” in Patterns of Migration, 1850–1914, ed. Aubrey Newman and Stephen W. Massil, (London, 1996), 159–61. For post-1927 data, this study has relied primarily on Jacob Rader Marcus, comp., To Count a People: American Jewish Population Data, 1585–1984, a volume that contains a great deal of information but that inexplicably omits some important population figures, including those from AJYB 9 (1907–08). Note also that To Count a People contains a mistake that is significant for this study: it reports the population data for Woodland, California, c. 1878, as data for “Novilland,” thus perpetuating an error contained in the published Statistics of the Jews. This error was discovered by examining the manuscript ledger used in preparing Statistics of the Jews, preserved in MS Collection #10, 66/2, at the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati (hereafter cited as AJA).

2. Note that a few triple-digit communities that appear in the data for c. 1878 or c. 1907 and seem to disappear by 1927 are in fact simply communities that ceased to have their populations reported separately. These communities are that of Georgetown, which became part of Washington, D.C.; that of Roundout, which became part of Kingston, New York; that of Allegheny, which became part of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; those of Maspeth and Corona, which were within the New York borough of Queens; those of Bath Beach and Coney Island, which were within the New York borough of Brooklyn; and that of Port Richmond, which was on New York’s Staten Island.

3. This figure is based on six cases where specific population figures are available for both c. 1878 and c. 1907.

4. This figure is based on fourteen cases where specific population figures are
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available for both c. 1907 and 1927.


14. On Colorado, see, e.g., Tritz, “Jews of Leadville,”35. On Northumberland, see
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“Jewish Cemetery” (reference citation from the Local History Room, Priestley–Forsyth Memorial Library, Northumberland, Pa.).

15. See Goodstein, Exploring Jewish Colorado, 132; and Uchill, Pioneers, Peddlers, and Tsadikim, 105–06. The Helena directory is quoted in Dean, “Jewish Community of Helena,” 43.


18. This information on Jewish institutions was gleaned from a variety of sources, including Statistics of the Jews; AJYB 2 (1900–01); Rudolf Glanz, The Jews of California from the Discovery of Gold until 1880 (New York, 1960), 77; and “Louisiana,” UJE 7: 208. None of the dates for the founding of institutions reported in this study should be considered incontrovertible, however, because different sources frequently give conflicting information in this regard and it is often difficult to establish what is correct. To take but two examples, the date of the founding of the B’nai Israel congregation in Keokuk, Iowa, is given as 1853 in AJYB 21 (1919–20): 374; 1856 in AJYB 2 (1900–01): 254; 1864 in Statistics of the Jews, 42; and 1865 in AJYB 9 (1907–08): 180; while the date for the founding of B’nai Israel in Columbus, Mississippi, is given as 1845 in “Mississippi,” UJE 7: 588; 1879 in AJYB 9 (1907–08): 227; and 1897 in AJYB 21 (1919–20): 409.

19. This information on organized Jewish life in the communities listed in table 2 is gleaned primarily from AJYB 9 (1907–08). Interestingly, Goodstein, Exploring Jewish Colorado, 133, reports that the Jewish congregation in Cripple Creek was “stillborn” in 1899, but AJYB 9 (1907–08): 138 indicates the existence of a congregation there several years later, with Phil Goodstein’s great-grandfather as secretary!


23. For a list of places to which the IRO sent immigrants, see Tenth Annual Report of the Industrial Removal Office for the Year Nineteen Hundred and Ten (New York, 1911), table 1.


25. Eureka had a total population of 4,207 in 1880, but by 1900 it no longer exist-
ed as a separate corporate entity and the entire precinct of which the town had once been a part was home to only 877 people. Virginia City's population plunged from 10,917 in 1880 to only 2,695 in 1900.


27. See Goodstein, Exploring Jewish Colorado, 134; and "Jewish Cemetery" (Northumberland).

28. This figure is based on eleven cases for which data are available for both 1880 and 1900.

29. These were the communities of Los Angeles, California; Peoria, Illinois; Indianapolis, Indiana; Des Moines, Iowa; Shreveport, Louisiana; Vicksburg, Mississippi; and Scranton, Pennsylvania. Nevada had no triple-digit communities of the 1870s that survived into the early twentieth century.

30. This figure is based on seventeen cases for which data are available for both 1910 and 1930.

31. These were the communities of Selma, Alabama; Fort Smith, Arkansas; Pueblo, Colorado; Rock Island, Illinois; South Bend, Indiana; Sioux City, Iowa; Lexington, Kentucky; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Meridian, Mississippi; Butte, Montana; New Rochelle, New York; Asheville, North Carolina; McKeesport, Pennsylvania; El Paso, Texas; and Portsmouth, Virginia.


33. On Madison, see Elizabeth Weinberg, “And Then There Was Only One” (unpublished paper, ca. 1990), 5; on Ligonier, see Stix, “Jewish Demography of Ligonier”; and on Owensboro, see Weissbach, “Stability and Mobility,” 369.


Disappearing Jewish Communities in the Era of Mass Migration

On Eufaula, see “Alabama,” UJE 1: 153.

40. See Henry A. Garon, Donaldsonville, Its Businessmen and Their Commerce at the Turn of the Century (New Orleans, 1976), 6; Israelites of Louisiana, 128; and “Jewish Synagogue,” Donaldsonville Chief.


42. On Jonesboro, see LeMaster, Corner of the Tapestry, esp. 309ff, 366–67. On Keokuk, see Fleishaker, Illinois–Iowa Jewish Community, 176.

43. This information on congregations is from AJYB 31 (1929–30): 223–31; The Standard American–Jewish Directory, (n.p., 1960); Ellen Chernofsky, ed., Traveling Jewish in America (Lodi, N.J., 1991); and a letter to the author from Robert Kaplan of Owensboro, June 18, 1989. In Tupper Lake, New York, although there is no longer a Jewish congregation, Sabbath services and other programs are held in the historic Beth Joseph synagogue in the summer; see the Tupper Lake Internet site at http:llwww.tupperlakeinfo.com. Helena, Montana, has recently begun to attract new Jewish residents, and an effort is currently being made to organize some Jewish communal activity there; e-mail message to the author from Janet Tatz of Helena, January 29, 1998.

44. See, for example, Glanz, Jews of California; Levinson, Jews in the California Gold Rush; and Susan Morris, A Traveler’s Guide to Pioneer Jewish Cemeteries of the California Gold Rush (Berkeley, Calif., 1996).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Jewish Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woodland</td>
<td>Calif.</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottawa</td>
<td>Ill.</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attica</td>
<td>Ind.</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Porte</td>
<td>Ind.</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>Ind.</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keokuk</td>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayou Sara/</td>
<td>La.</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Francisville</td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donaldsonville</td>
<td>La.</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>Miss.</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eureka</td>
<td>Nev.</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia City</td>
<td>Nev.</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>Pa.</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Sources: See note 1 to the text.
Disappearing Jewish Communities in the Era of Mass Migration

Table 2

Communities of the United States with Triple-Digit Jewish Populations, c. 1907, and Jewish Populations under 100, 1927

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Jewish Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>c. 1878</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eufaula</td>
<td>Ala.</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonesboro</td>
<td>Ark.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cripple Creek</td>
<td>Colo.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadville</td>
<td>Colo.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>Ill.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goshen</td>
<td>Ind.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ligonier</td>
<td>Ind.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owensboro</td>
<td>Ky.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowley</td>
<td>La.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Calumet</td>
<td>Mich.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crystal Falls</td>
<td>Mich.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Gibson</td>
<td>Miss.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Helena</td>
<td>Mont.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tupper Lake</td>
<td>N.Y.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>New Bern</td>
<td>N.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumberland</td>
<td>Pa.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gainesville</td>
<td>Tex.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pocahontas</td>
<td>Va.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sources: See note 1 to the text.
“Training men and women in dignity, in civic righteousness, and in the responsibilities of American citizenship”: The Thought of Rabbi Abram Simon, 1897–1938

by Marc Lee Raphael

I

Simon was the greatest orator that I have ever heard in my life, and one of the greatest extemporaneous speakers of our time.

Harry Sylvester Wender

Rabbi Abram Simon, president of the Central Conference of American (Reform) Rabbis from 1923 to 1925, and senior rabbi of Washington Hebrew Congregation from 1904 to his death in 1938, built his rabbinate around his public lectures, sermons, and addresses more than anything else. Like so many other Reform rabbis of his generation, he conducted weddings, funerals, and life-cycle events for congregants, taught classes for the sisterhood ladies on various weekdays and for adult members on occasional Sunday mornings and weekday evenings, and even wrote a pamphlet or two on Jewish education. Unlike many colleagues, he spent the bulk of his time preparing the public speeches he delivered at the congregation, at churches, at local halls and schools, and even in national forums. And finding the time was no simple matter, for in addition to the burden of life-cycle events for a growing congregation, he served for many years as president of the District of Columbia Board of Education as well as in numerous other civic and communal positions. But the extant manuscript copies of scores of sermons in the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives reveal the considerable time he spent crafting and editing his public addresses, searching for the perfect word and phrase, in the rhetorical style of his day, with which to move his audience. His sermons and other talks, rich in poetic phrases and powerful descriptions of the natural world, were clearly meant to be heard, not read, and hence we must remain constantly aware that we can only retrieve the text of an oral message.

Rabbi Simon had many years of schooling to prepare him for this
task, including nine years at the Hebrew Union College (he entered in 1885 at age thirteen) and (concomitantly) four years at the University of Cincinnati, and he took a Ph.D. degree in religion from the George Washington University in the District of Columbia. He read widely in Judaic and general studies, though he was not one of those rabbis (so common between the world wars) who regularly reviewed every best-seller for his congregation. He read mostly in philosophy and religion, though his interest in sociology and contemporary social issues was strong, but if there was one source to which he returned over and over it was the Hebrew Bible. It brought him considerable inspiration and consolation, and it usually provided the text from which his lecture, sermon, or address would spring.

II

Who can stand before the giant mountains with their bulk thrown against the sky and with their pyramidal tongues trying to get the first warm kiss of the passionate sun, without a sense of their awe-inspiring majesty, and without looking beyond them to the Power whose creative fingers moulded chaos into cosmic order?

(Yom Kippur morning, 1937)

Many Progressives dismissed personal God notions, substituted as the highest value man’s communion with man (fellowship, loyalty, love), and sanctified community. But Simon affirmed the reality of a personal, creating, revealing God from his earliest sermons in Sacramento in the 1890s to his last address in Washington, D.C., in the late 1930s. He accepted the truth of revelation, asserting over and over that the Jewish religion began in a theophany, that divine revelation was the keystone of his faith, and that God revealed Himself continually. Indeed, Simon wondered why someone would even imagine worshiping a nonrevealing God. "I believe in God," Rabbi Simon would often exclaim, and though he insisted that he could not demonstrate God’s existence, and though he realized that his own conception of God had changed over the years of his rabbinate, he felt comfortable affirming that life had its source in God, that God forgave sin, that "God is real to me; he exists; I live by the promises of God," and that "the belief in God was and is the most natural instinct of the human heart."

No less than God and prayer did Simon affirm heaven, by which
he meant the traditional Jewish belief in immortality of the soul and resurrection of the body. It was an equal opportunity heaven that he would describe; God would not distinguish between Jew, Christian, or Moslem, nor would any soul be denied access. The infant, the soldier, the woman who died in pregnancy—all would receive the "Father's embrace."

III

[The Bible] came like the burning sun clearing away the dense clouds of sin and idolatry, sending at the same time its warm, enlivening rays into the hearts of its lovers.

(Sacramento, 1897)

Because Rabbi Simon affirmed, without qualification, divine revelation of the Torah, it is not surprising that the Bible was the text he loved and from which he quoted consistently and with ease. From the Bible he developed a sophisticated understanding of religion, always taking care to define what he meant by the word religion and to delineate the essential ingredients of his faith. He did this in a philosophical manner in his 1907 dissertation, "The Constructive Character and Function of Religion in Human Progress as Illustrated by the Religion of Israel," in addresses he delivered to the national association of Reform rabbis before and during his presidency of their organization, and in public lectures and sermons.

In brief, he argued from sociological, historical, psychological, and philosophical perspectives that a religion needed an idea of God, an idea of sin, and an idea of mission, and his faith included a strong endorsement of all three. His affirmation of "mission" was extremely radical for Reform rabbis of his generation and especially for the leader of such an Americanized congregation. He regularly urged a "militant attitude" in support of Jews who spread Judaic teachings and of rabbis who welcomed non-Jews into the Jewish faith. In a 1924 lecture celebrating the 100th anniversary of Cincinnati's Bene Israel, Rabbi Simon called for a mission to "nominal Christians, to the thousands of wandering, non-observant Christians." He was "proud of the truth that the Jewish religion was a proselyting [sic] religion" and was "sorry, oh so sorry, that for two thousand years we have lost the daring to continue the proselyting [sic]."

Indeed, these three characteristics of religion in general were
"most highly developed in Judaism." At least until World War I and the 
"reddened earth of twenty nations" shattered some of his optimism, 
Simon spoke repeatedly of religion and human progress, with the 
optimistic, theological presumptions shared by many Protestants and 
Jews of his age. Judaism (or what he strangely called "Reformed" 
Judaism) represented "decided progress and ethical growth," and for 
the first quarter century or so of his rabbinate he could speak of the 
"historic development of [the] moral nature of man." But even when 
he lost faith in the progress of humankind, he never wavered in his 
conviction that Judaism was "irresistably [sic] driven to unity, and to a 
progressive evaluation of this unity in terms of the highest morally 
creative Personality."4

IV

_The progress of science in the past decades is well-nigh dazzling._

(Ventnor, New Jersey, July 10, 1904)

None of this unshakable faith in a living God compromised Rabbi 
Simon's genuine enthusiasm for science and its discoveries in the nat-
ural world. Theories of Survival of the Fittest and Artificial Selection 
("the triumph of man") were woven into his theology ("The fittest 
have survived; can we not see wherein we are powerful agents and 
partners with God in this universal plan?"); discoveries about the sun 
and stars as well as atoms and electric charges were applauded as 
divinely approved efforts to unlock the "secrets of this wondrous uni-
verse." Matter especially interested Simon, but once again he saw no 
conflict between his theology and his embracing of natural science, for 
the Jew believes that one may be "legitimately scientific and whole-
somely religious at one and the same time." Though matter may have 
been the "fundamental reality," God, for Simon, was the "Supreme 
Personality and ultimate reality." Just about anything in the world of 
science he viewed enthusiastically, for it helped all of us look beyond 
ourselves to the "Power whose creative fingers moulded chaos into 
cosmic order." Like so many Progressives, there was a material world 
to conquer, to spiritualize, and the scientist was God's necessary agent 
in this Progressive task. Science meant progress, and its achievements 
would bring about a social utopia. He felt that Judaism "religionized 
creation," and he would typically express this notion in words such as 
these that he used once on Rosh Hashanah: "grasping the underlying
Unity of the Cosmos towards which Science has been groping for many centuries, a cause equal to the existence and the perpetuation of the Universe."5

V

Here must habits of cleanliness, sobriety and honesty be drilled.

(New York, 1914)

Historians of progressivism, the first modern reform upsurge, have continually expanded the constituency of this "movement"6 from Anglo-Saxon Protestant professionals or the urban middle class to lower-class, urban politicians, social workers, organized labor, settlement house reformers, and clergymen.7 Although they have been hard pressed to agree about the terminal date of progressivism, they generally place the end of the movement before 1920, when "public enthusiasm that generated much reform in the pre-World War I period flagged."8 With an exception or two, most of Rabbi Abram Simon's sermons and talks on Progressive themes (minimum wage, scientific management, public welfare, child labor legislation, workmen's compensation, mothers' pensions, pure food) took place during the 1920s, and he helped keep the themes of the movement alive for a decade or so after most others had faded.

The one theme Simon developed at the height of progressivism was his commitment to the public schools (he would later serve as president of the board of education in 1920–21, 1922–23, and 1931–32, and the District of Columbia later named an elementary school, at Fourth and Mississippi SE, Streets in his memory). Numerous reformers, as they watched the effects of rapid industrialization and urbanization in American cities at the turn of the century, called for public school reforms, and Simon echoed many of their concerns. He thought the public school was the city's chief civic asset, the "melting pot" where immigrant and native children could merge into model Americans, and he envisioned a school where youngsters "would readily debate the great problems of the day, or listen eagerly to addresses on hygiene, civic responsibility or filial duty." Most of all, when he spoke about the public schools, he utilized the vocabulary of the Progressive reformers of the early twentieth century: manners, cleanliness of person, regard for health and moderation, citizenship, respect for authority, "chivalrous regard for the sex" (women), the virtue and dignity of labor, and the words Progress and Efficiency with
upper-case letters. Whenever possible, he sought biblical (rather than Protestant) sources for social action and social justice, using the Prophets to call for urban reform.

He not only lectured and wrote about reforming and revitalizing the public schools but argued that a "rational and righteous response" to a community's "progressive needs" included a public university. Like the public schools, Simon felt that the university, available to every qualified citizen in the community, must "open its windows upon LIFE." Just as he had argued that the public schools should train youngsters for civic appreciation and ethical citizenship, so the university should involve itself with the slum, poverty, crime, social settlements, factory, and shop. The ideal university student, echoing Progressive education reformers, should learn to "know his city." In this manner, the university would be the city's greatest asset.

Before Rabbi Simon had an opportunity to head the board of education and articulate this vision for the larger population of the District of Columbia, he set about attempting to bring a Progressive vision of efficient management and moral education to the Washington Hebrew Congregation Sunday School. He, like so many Progressive reformers, correctly grasped that efficient organization was a prerequisite for more socially conscious citizens. The Sunday school, as the synagogue, ought not to ignore the "upstream and downstream of human life" but should use its moral energy and conscience to affect the world outside the school. In another era, the emphasis would be on Judaic studies, but in the Progressive Era Simon spoke to educators about chivalry, bodily cleanliness ("a healthy body made for a healthy mind"), rebuilding community, and especially honor. He would emphasize honor to the Sunday school teachers and the board of managers; indeed, he tried to "inflame" the children with a passion for honor. And by honor Rabbi Simon usually meant a respect for one's own body (cleanliness) and a respect for other bodies. More than Hebrew, Bible, history, or liturgy, Simon believed, with other urban reformers, that a clean and healthy body would inevitably lead to a strong moral character.

VI

*God is as near to us in our buying and selling as He is in our preaching and praying.*

(Saint Louis, 1925)
Not only were urban social reform and Protestantism linked in the Progressive Era, but a large social justice movement characterized Reform Judaism in the early twentieth century. The social gospel movement of the late nineteenth century grew to maturity in the Progressive Era. It continued to recruit clergy (ministers and rabbis, especially) and laypersons who tried to bring justice and righteousness to all areas of human activity. Yet Simon and the leaders of the Eighth Street Temple made little effort to encourage the members, as a congregation, to respond to urbanization and try to solve some of the city's problems, for his Progressive vision did not seem to include the sense that an informed congregation could solve some of the urban problems of its age. But the rabbi did constantly challenge the materialism of his increasingly bourgeois members with a sermon or two on the High Holidays, the worship services at which nearly every member of the congregation was present. He especially complained in the 1920s, a decade that he called the "Plastic Age of shallow materialism," that the businessmen of the congregation expected him to "put it over," to "sell Judaism" as they sold goods. Mirroring the Committee on Synagogue and Labor, created by the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1910, he regularly asked his congregants if they were making efforts in their own lives to champion a decent wage for workers, restrictions on hiring children, government inspection of meat, unemployment and disability insurance for workers, and ethical transactions in the marketplace. In fact, the "most resplendent ethical triumph of the century," he concluded, was the growing awareness in the world of commerce that there was an ethical Magna Charta. He conveyed a strong sense, over several decades of preaching to merchants, that the heart of the religious message was to buy and sell with the highest ethical standard possible.13

VII

The city of Washington is our Zion, as dear to God as was Jerusalem; can it not become the City of God?

(Washington, D.C., 1925)

For more than half a century after Theodor Herzl founded the Zionist movement at the end of the 1890s, Washington Hebrew Congregation would present a non-Zionist (and later, a militant non-Zionist) face to the community. Convinced that a commitment to
a Jewish state in Palestine compromised integration into American society by "degrading the true Jewish patriotism," the congregation's rabbinic and lay leaders would make sure, at least until the 1950s, that nobody confused the congregation with support for a future Jewish national home or even, at first, for the new state of Israel. No Jewish (Israeli) flag would ever grace the pulpit, though Rabbi Simon frequently stated that the congregation "wrapped the folds of our American flag around the mantle of our sacred Scroll." He was as committed to Americanism as to Judaism ("twin children of our consciousness") and was determined not only to give Judaism and Americanism equal affection but to make sure he conveyed his distaste for Zionism. In 1915, in response to a Zionist lecture in Washington by Louis D. Brandeis the previous week, Simon told his congregation that "whichever side is triumphant in the war, the lot of the Jew will be better in Europe, and talk of his persecution will be a thing of the past." So, in the United States as in Europe, a "Zionist–American–Jew is a double–hyphenated American," and "any Jew who so considers himself ought to rid his country of his presence." This, for Simon, was the major threat Zionism posed for his congregants. Seemingly proud and happy in their American citizenship, they imagined that an affirmation of Zionism would compromise their American citizenship by opening them to charges of dual loyalty.

But in the strange manner of many other Reform rabbis, while he detested Zionism and told his members that "America is our Zion," he did love the "other" Zion, or at least he felt kindly toward the Jewish community of Palestine. He could insist that the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. was a blessing, not a curse, because Judaism has flourished outside Palestine and needs neither Jerusalem nor Zion. But he applauded the Jewish "redemptive rehabilitation" of Palestine from time to time, calling the pioneers a "great civilization," opposing British restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine and telling the settlers how much he admired them. At the same time, he could insist that he did not agree with their vision of Jewish nationalism, for their passion for a Jewish state threatened Jewish integration in America and made their living together with the Arabs much more difficult, if not impossible. Not that Rabbi Simon did not harbor his own nationalism. He was no less a chauvinist and nationalist than the Jews of Palestine. He regularly lauded
American hegemony and power, giving gratitude and thanks over and over for his great fortune in living in the greatest country in the world. Not only was Washington (not alone America) Zion, but in 1925 and again in 1937, in Washington, he repeated the claim that “God is in this place and in this country.”

VIII
Orthodox and Conservative Jews have developed excellent institutions and a fine quality of leadership.

(Washington, D.C., 1927)

Much of Simon’s ministry was devoted to ecumenical talks, whether to Christian groups (he made numerous alliances with Christian leaders) or in support of “Jewish ecumenism.” When addressing the former, he tried his best to help Judaism gain acceptance as one of the three major faiths in the civic arena, disguising the fact that Jews were a tiny percentage of the total population and arguing that they deserved “one-third” representation in the civic arena. In the late 1920s he was deeply involved in the Threefold movement, where representatives of (seemingly) every major faith attended gatherings (often hosted by Rabbi Simon at the Eighth Street Temple) that paid tribute (in song, poetry, liturgy, and talks) to the founders of these faiths. Simon felt strongly that such events would “demystify Judaism” and help eliminate “religious prejudice.” From time to time, in addition, he delivered powerful and intellectually sophisticated sermons on the Christian origins of anti-Semitism, as well as the Christian influence on the development of racism, and regularly protested the Christian claim that a New Dispensation had replaced the Old Dispensation. He presented Judaism to Christians as a respectable religion deeply concerned with the city in which the synagogue stood.

He was equally well advanced over most of his colleagues in his Jewish ecumenism. He was frequently critical of Reform Judaism, particularly of its tendency to “spread a lot of platitudes” and to “become synonymous with a cold intellectualism and with a stereotyped rationalism.” He spoke intelligently about Conservative and Orthodox Judaism and was eager to cooperate with their followers wherever possible. He was in the lead in organizing all three religious branches of Judaism into one organization, the Synagogue Council of America; early in 1925, in an address to the Union of American Hebrew
Congregations, the national organization of Reform congregations, he called for a union of the three groups. In an address to the National Jewish Congregational and Rabbinical Organizations a few months later, he claimed "there is only one Judaism," despite the varieties, and that an organization of Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox congregations (he underestimated the total when he used the figure 750) would have great clout. He repeated this theme in his presidential address to the CCAR that year and again spoke with respect and appreciation for the contributions of his Orthodox and Conservative colleagues and their congregations. It came as no surprise that Orthodox colleagues in Washington would memorialize Rabbi Simon with considerable affection.15

IX
Unregulated immigration is vexing and vicious.

(Washington, D.C., 1912)

Rabbi Simon was a conspicuous participant in the Americanization movement. At first, he wished that the Russian Jews would "remain where they are, face the problem, and overcome it," but by the early years of the twentieth century he realized that Italians and Jews, "America's most serious and perplexing problem," would not remain in Europe but would continue to come in enormous numbers year after year. Then, like so many Progressives, he championed an intensive program to acculturate the millions of immigrants, to make them more like "old American stock." But his vision of remaking the Russian Jews was not in the image of older Americans but that of the German-Jewish bourgeois elite, that is, leaders of Washington Hebrew Congregation. They could not all be "remade," and the first step was to support the "regulation of immigration," not stopping it completely but by enacting legislation that would control the "excess." The leading journal of Progressive opinion, the New Republic, used the same language as early as 1916 when it warned that the United States could not permit "social ills to be aggravated by excessive immigration."16 In this, Rabbi Simon was not alone, as numerous Progressives, yielding to the racist hysteria accompanying the war, accepted the passage of the first immigration bill (February 1917) requiring a literacy test. John Higham has noted how "Teddy Roosevelt best rode the [antihyphenate] movement; Woodrow Wilson surrendered to it, and
together they illustrated the change that the progressive impulse was undergoing." Simon's Americanization program would seek to teach the immigrants American literature and American politics, so they would be "loyal, healthy, useful, productive Americans." And the congregation's women were doing exactly that through the Council of Jewish Women, the United Hebrew Charities, and the various settlement house programs with which they were involved."

Women are entering the political, industrial and civil world; then why exclude them from the ministry if they desire to enter it?

(Washington, D.C., 1920)

It is not easy to separate the views of Rabbi Simon on women from those of his wife, Carrie Oberdorfer Simon (1872–1961). She was a bright, aggressive, talented, ambitious woman whose causes would have rankled many men and women even if she had been pleasing rather than abrasive. Her strident independence and even pararabbinic demeanor grated on numerous members of the congregation's board who felt the rabbi's wife should be frequently seen but rarely heard. Many current synagogue members recall their mothers' pride, and jealousy, over Carrie's achievements. A contemporary of Carrie later noted her "cruel" and biting wit, which she often used to ridicule and belittle people."

She had founded the national sisterhood movement in Cincinnati in January 1913 with 52 sisterhoods, and as the first president of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods she was constantly on the lecture circuit in the years after 1913. By the end of 1914 there were already 100 sisterhoods with 15,000 members. In her role as national president of the Reform sisterhoods for six years after she founded the organization, Carrie frequently spoke from the pulpits of Reform congregations throughout the country.

When the NFTS pushed the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to urge congregations to include a woman among their leaders, Carrie was there to make sure the Eighth Street Temple placed her, sisterhood president and rabbi's wife, on the congregation's board. No doubt some members of the board felt compromised; the rabbi was not invited to board meetings, but his wife became an automatic member in 1923! By later standards, her feminism was moder-
ate if not mild, but no doubt the conservative leadership of the con-
gregation felt threatened by her, and many simply disliked her. It is no
longer possible to separate the professional from the personal in this
area.

In point of fact, those who listened to her speeches ought to have
been calmed by much of her message, and it is possible that the rabbi
held views of his own more liberal than those of his wife. She told
women that their place was in the home; they should not “abdicate”
the “throne,” for “within our domestic kingdoms, we are queens.” She
urged women “to rejoice in the privileges of wifehood,” and she told
them to reject “feminism” and affirm “womanliness.” She did also
insist that women must do more in the synagogue than “collect
money, supply altar clothes, or brush up the handles of the big front
door,” but the areas she usually proposed were hardly threatening:
encourage worship attendance, interest the children in religious
school, develop congregational hospitality, and encourage more con-
gregational singing.22

Perhaps it was the part of her speeches in which she urged not
only that women, with “religious fervor,” serve as “Para-rabbis” (com-
pare this point with Rabbi Simon’s strong hope that women would
become rabbis) assisting the rabbi in ministering to “minds that are
unhappy and to people that are seeking the comfort of God,” or her
proposals that “girls view the Jewish ministry as a legitimate field for
the operation of their distinctive talents and abilities,” that seemed
threatening. Perhaps it was just her presence, jealousy of sisterhood
women, and especially the sense among some male leaders that pow-
erful women such as Mrs. Abram Simon threatened their exclusive
male control of the synagogue.23

Rabbi Simon’s attitudes toward women were ambivalent. He was
a strong advocate of legalizing birth control, although he felt it was
exclusively the responsibility of the woman. He detested almost any-
thing that challenged bourgeois sex standards, such as “Companionate” marriages24 yet he supported the efforts of some
women’s groups to enact “no-fault” divorce legislation. For the most
part, he excoriated his generation’s “flabby morality,” blaming it
(rather superficially) on coeducation, cheap novels, jazz, “bedroom
farces,” and the “sensation” press. He was a strong supporter of woman
suffrage, of women’s social and political equality, and of the right of
Jewish women to become rabbis, on the grounds that all people
should be able to achieve their fullest human potential, but he also rejected the suggestion that women should be allowed in the Masons and argued that the primary responsibility for home and children rested on them. A conservative, Republican man of his time, he nevertheless could break out of his generation’s thinking and articulate some ideas that were not widely held until well after he passed from the scene. He argued for legalized birth control, expanded rights for women (including rabbinical ordination), rigorous business ethics, active programs to reach out to potential converts, and—with typical Progressive vocabulary—dedication to exercise and nutrition. Most of all, he had a vision of achdut, Jewish unity. He called for dialogue among interdenominational rabbinic leadership with the hope that such dialogue would transcend ideological barriers for the sake of the common good of the Jewish people.

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NOTES


6. It is more meaningful to speak of many Progressive “movements” rather than a movement, on many levels, marked by the rapid formation and dissolution of coalitions around different and often contradictory causes; see Arthur S. Link, “What Happened to the Progressive Movement in the 1920’s?” American Historical Review 64, no. 4 (July 1959): 833–51.


The Thought of Rabbi Abram Simon


20. After ten years, the NFTS had grown to 288 sisterhoods with about 45,000 members. Proceedings of the Fifth Assembly of the NFTS (New York, 1923), 102.


23. “What can the women do for Judaism” (n.d.), in Simon Collection, AJA.

24. Judge Ben B. Lindsey wrote The Companionate Marriage in 1927, and by this term he meant a legal marriage, with legalized birth control, and with the right to divorce by mutual consent for childless couples, usually without the payment of alimony. Middle-class and upper-class Americans had been doing precisely these things routinely, but Lindsey wanted to make these steps available to the poor as well. Rabbi Simon, like most clergymen, misunderstood Lindsey’s argument (one wonders if he actually read the book) and joined both conservative and liberal clergy (including Rabbi Stephen S. Wise) in attacking him. In addition to the book, and numerous attacks on it and the author scattered through the New York Times during 1927 and 1928, see Lindsey’s long obituary in the New York Times, March 27, 1943, 13.

25. Dedication of Sioux City, Iowa, Mount Sinai Temple, Reform Advocate, September 14, 1901; Evening Star, October 9, 1920; “Washington and the American Tradition” (n.d.).
Moritz Loeb (1812–87), if not the best known of American Jewish fictionists, was certainly among the earliest of the breed. In general, it may be said, Loeb’s was a rather extraordinary life in his mid-nineteenth-century generation.

The German–born Loeb settled in the 1830s at Doylestown in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where he embarked upon a noteworthy career as a journalist and public figure. For many years he edited Doylestown’s German-language Morgenstern and somehow found time to compose at least two short stories on the experience of immigrant German Jews in his contemporary Pennsylvania. These fictions cannot be rated major contributions to German or American literature, but they are shrewd, humorous, romantic, and knowing portrayals of immigrant life. They reflect Loeb’s characteristically genial view of his surroundings and his sympathy for the effort to translate Jewish identity from what it had been in Central Europe into what the new American setting seemed to require.

In Cincinnati, Isaac Mayer Wise, Loeb’s fellow immigrant and (part–time) fellow journalist, was happy to publish the two tales in his German–language Deborah. Wise thought highly of Loeb, whom he eulogized as possessed of an “enviable reputation for rectitude, uprightness, prudence and honor.” In Bucks County, Wise observed, Loeb “had no opportunity to come much in contact” with Jews yet “took a lively interest in all Jewish affairs.”

In “Abraham Urjella or the Struggle over Principle,” which appeared in the Deborah in 1870 (and in our English translation in 1995 in American Jewish History), Loeb offered a portrait of an immigrant intellectual. “A Pennsylvania Timepiece,” published in the
Deborah in 1871, depicts the trials — the internal politics — of a community and its early immigrant rabbi-educators. Both stories constitute a valuable as well as entertaining reflection of the time and place in which they were written. Both enrich our sense of the stresses and strains and also the boldness of immigrant adaptation to the nineteenth-century American scene in the generation preceding the upheavals that brought huge numbers of East European Jews to the New World.

A Pennsylvania Timepiece. Based on Life.

By M. Loeb.

Die Deborah 16 (June 9, 1871, to July 21, 1871)

"If I knew," said Reb Jossef to himself, as he sat at his desk, "If I knew that I had something to say at the next Sabbath afternoon gathering, I would gladly accept Dr. Jacobi's invitation. Strange," muttered the rabbi, after some contemplation, "strange that I torture myself with such a simple request. If I knew! I don't know and I don't know any better than to know that Dr. Jacobi's viewpoints on reform and Judaism don't agree with mine, and I don't feel my soul weeping, but I do see the innovations requested by the congregation and introduced by Dr. Jacobi. What would be the purpose of my presence at their gathering?" Reb Jossef was a talented man, rich in experience and knowledge of human nature. He had studied Jewish theology in Fürth and Würzburg and when he emigrated in the year 18— to E., in the state of Pennsylvania, the twenty-five well-disposed Jewish families who lived there gladly engaged him. What these people wanted from him he realized soon enough. His clear-sightedness and his kind heart made their point of view obvious. He organized all the Jews in E. and its surroundings into a congregation, and opened classes to which the children came with their parents at appointed times. They met in a spacious rented hall that had been converted into a synagogue to hear his admonitions and be uplifted by his teachings. Reb Jossef strictly observed the Sabbath, and the obligatory milchig and fleischig dishes were not absent from his home. He was humane and unbiased in all of his sermons. To be sure, his only and eternal God counted more than the Trinity with its son, but he was convinced that there was room enough in heaven for everybody.
The actions of this good man soon bore fruit. Under his supervision the children's knowledge ranked among the best of what other schools in the county could produce; his charges clung with true children's devotion to this thoroughly learned man, while their parents worshiped him almost as a saint.

So the years passed. The congregation blossomed and its membership increased—but so did the differing ideas of its members. Had it not been for that, Reb Jossef's well-earned civic crown would not have borne any thorns. The congregation grew and prospered, and now the members began to grasp that they were entitled not only to their own synagogue, but to a beautiful one. The well-to-do members took steps toward that end.

Reb Jossef was in full accord with this wish but wanted to make sure that, before large sums were spent on creating a more splendid and luxurious house of worship, his children's school would be provided for so that his hope of establishing an up-to-date academy would be realized. Many of the members shrugged their shoulders. Meierle and his son Markus, who stood out from all the others, were determined—and for the first time—to go against Reb Jossef's wishes. "We want a bekowete schuhl, the heder will come later."

Reb Jossef had two children, Hannchen and Simon, who had lost their mother prematurely. The father's caring eye in the raising of his children in the absence of a mother resulted in a trusting relationship. As the children grew up their modesty and industry gained the respect and friendship of the entire neighborhood. Reb Jossef was thus richly rewarded for his efforts and concerns. Circumstances intervened, however: a synagogue was to be built and a meeting was called.

Heiman, the parnass, who was shortly to be succeeded by Rosenheim in this position, chaired the meeting and Meierle hurried to air his views: "I believe that we men of such a strong kahl as ours is should have our own synagogue, especially since we can now afford to build one."

Rosenheim. I believe we should first figure out the expenses which the congregation must shoulder in such an undertaking.

Mortche. And then procure the means to defray the costs. I don't like to dance when the musician hasn't been paid.

Markus. Never mind that! When the synagogue is built it will also be paid for. We'll issue bonds and the young unmarried people in the congregation will bid up everything in order to redeem them. You may
bet your life on it!

Rosenheim. Reb Jossef, would you be good enough to let us know your opinion on this matter?

Reb Jossef. I’ll come directly to the point. Whoever neglects the instruction of children by erecting a pompous building and believes he can justify it, will also declare the hand of a murderer innocent, because he attempts to wipe off the blood stains.

Meierle. Excuse me, Reb Jossef. I was always your friend, but in this matter I cannot agree with you. Why should we be the only congregation in all E. which pays rent in a bettelhaus? Can’t we do like the others and have a beautiful, dignified synagogue? Are the others better than we are?

Reb Jossef. The others are not better than you, unless your mania for imitation fools you into thinking they are better. The heart may in its wantonness allow itself to be governed by ignorance and may believe it can break the bounds of the soul if its highest goal is to revel in the pomp, luxury, and splendor of human achievement. Great God! Wise Solomon! Not in vain did you assign the pig a golden nose ring.

Markus. May I ask, Reb Jossef, what you just said? How am I to understand it?

Mortche. How is it, Mister Meierle, that your Markus speaks two languages at the same time? He hardly knows half a language correctly.

Meierle. My Markus deals with English-and German-speaking people. Therefore, he speaks so that both can be understood by him. What’s more, it’s a language our Pennsylvania German “bisiness-Jehudem” consider their mother tongue when they’re together.

Mortche. Can I ask you Mr. Meierle: Did your Markus learn this language from Pastor Wendel across the street, or does he have other intentions there?

Markus. Mr. Chairman, I’d like to point out that Mortche is out of order. He is not in order.

Chairman. Gentlemen, in our deliberations let’s keep in mind the purpose of our meeting. Order, gentlemen!

Meierle. I’ll donate $500 for the new synagogue!

Markus. And I’ll donate another $200 and promise also to collect $400 from my Christian friends. I can do that.

Rosenheim. It’s most important that as much as possible be pledged and collected before we take any further steps in this matter.

Mortche. Mr. Chairman, I’d like to propose that Mr. Rosenheim’s opin-
Moritz Loeb: A Pennsylvania Timepiece

Mortche prevailed. A resolution in the spirit of Mr. Rosenheim’s views was adopted, and it was agreed to meet again in two weeks’ time. In these two weeks the congregation was busy. The well-off members contributed generously and raised considerable sums from out-of-town business friends. While those who sided with Reb Jossef made their offerings with willing hands, they let words drop that didn’t altogether please Mr. Meierle.

The appointed day of the meeting arrived and the congregants attended in large numbers. Reb Jossef chose not to be present, for he took the purpose of the meeting to be solely fund raising. Did he act wisely in this matter?

The efforts of the last two weeks proved successful. The designated contributions for the new house of worship amounted to a sizable sum. Even in the present meeting the members willingly sought to outdo one another in their generosity. Meierle’s Markus, however, stood out in his loud and serious insistence on a splendid and costly house of worship. Did the young man have ulterior motives, or was his soul drawn only to religion in colorfully decorated synagogue walls?

* * *

From Mortche’s remarks at a previous meeting the reader may have gathered that Markus liked to go to Father Wendel, who ministered to a Catholic church in E.

Wendel and his most beautiful, but young and single, niece were warmhearted people; to bring repentant sinners to their Redeemer was, of course, their life’s mission. Often honest Wendel and his beautiful niece Emilie could be heard telling Markus about the salvation to be found in the resurrected Son. When Markus listened, without objection, especially to the soothing words of Emilie, then old Wendel heard all the angels in all the heavens sing the loveliest songs of jubilation on the possible conversion of this Jew.

In the meantime, Markus’s conversion did not prove to be so simple. Markus hadn’t learned much in his youth, and had read even less; for him being a Jew consisted mainly in observing jahrzeit, the anniversary of a parent’s death, but the dogma of the birth of a God through the holy Virgin Mary he either denied or was too stubborn to admit. One day when Wendel handed Markus a crucifix and told him:
"Kiss the son of your God, Jew!" Markus replied: "If my God has so much carved wood for a son, let him kiss it himself."

Markus came often to Wendel and considered himself the priest's houseguest. Finally he became very friendly with Emilie. Not that her ready mention of the resurrection, baptism, and other sacraments made any impression on Markus; it was only to the voice of the beautiful priestess that his heart was harmoniously drawn. Her voice awakened the young man's passion, which had to be obeyed; matters of moral consequence were defeated in the struggle.

Wendel's relation to the Israelites in E. was friendly and, strange as it may sound, he took a keen interest in the upcoming synagogue question. Did he want the Jewish congregation to be beholden to him, or, if the synagogue was really to be built, did he want to utilize the existing disagreements leading to disunity within the congregation in order to employ his conversionary zeal to render the Jews what he believed would be a considerable service?

Enough, Father Wendel troubled himself in this purely Jewish matter, as the opponents of Reb Jossef conceived it, almost more than with his own affairs. The position Markus took in this respect must have followed a plan that Wendel himself had worked out.

Wendel's parents were modest people; they were members of the German Evangelical Church, or better, they numbered themselves among German Methodists. The young Wendel evidently had decided, after several strong awakenings — so he himself put it — to become a guardian of the Catholic Church, but he remained in his prayers and sermons true to the language and methods with which German Methodists were familiar and set themselves apart from all other denominations.

Before Markus betook himself to the meeting, he went to Wendel. "Remain true to your purpose at the meeting," remarked the priest, "and when Reb Jossef contradicts you, let him know that stinginess doesn't bring one to heaven and that Jerusalem's Temple was luxuriously decorated." "Yes, Markus," Emilie added, "whoever honors God in this fashion will receive honor from mankind, and my delight in such a person is doubled."

Whether these utterances were correct or not, Markus had fully convinced himself of his innocence. He didn't reply and went off to the meeting. As Mortche became aware of Markus, he remarked to Meierle: "Your Markus was probably at the priest's, Mister Meierle, since he came so late to the meeting, and that he has important busi-
ness there I naturally understand."
Meierle. I’m curious myself, Markus, what you were doing at Wendel’s?
Markus. Sure enough, Father, sometimes there are things which concern nobody but me, and if Mister Mortche minded his own business, he would be a good deal more of a gentleman!
Aaron. I’d like to ask, Mr. Chairman, if a calculation has been made on what the synagogue will cost.
Rosenheim. If we build as Meierle and his friends wish, it will probably cost more than we can pay. Of that I’m certain.
Markus. Well, suppose it does cost more than we can pay! Couldn’t our children do something for a beautiful, new synagogue? It is theirs as well as ours!
Aaron. We have no right to saddle our children with debts. If in order to love God, I and others must become indebted, then all love for such a God fades away.
Mortche. I take it for granted, Mister Markus, that our children will remain as poor as we are. Then who’s going to pay for the beautiful and costly synagogue?
Markus. Our children will know how to survive as well as we. Don’t trouble yourself about that, Mister Mortche.
Mortche. Then they’ll pass the debts on to our grandchildren. That’s probably the case with Mr. Markus’s children, when he marries, but not all good Jewish children, especially mine, have Father Wendel for an uncle.
"What?" thundered Meierle to Mortche, "What? You take no stand on integrating a taufel-eminah-mischpoche into this congregation? Did Reb Jossef teach you that? Is that how he’s instructed you?"
Markus. Of course!
Aaron. Speak with more respect about Reb Jossef, Mister Meierle, for without him our modern house of God is no more than a house of cards exposed to the storm.
Meierle. Well, we know that. Let’s get another rabbi from Germany, a doktor, who’s not concerned with the old humbug and the Gohles and will bring us closer to the Christians.
Aaron. And if such a doktor apes everything that sectarians, proselytes, and zealots proclaim as true Christianity in the name of the great Jew of Nazareth, do you believe that such aping will make you a respectable ape? You’ll still remain Jews, miserable Jews!
Markus. What? If we get a Jewish scholar, who has good credentials
from Germany, shouldn't he be able to teach us as well as old Reb Jossef? I don't understand that.

Aaron. Nobody can promise salvation to a congregation, which, at the expense of conscientious child rearing, takes pleasure in needless synagogue splendor, while in that self-same congregation children don't even understand most of the prayers. Among earlier generations, such as Meierle's, that was not so unusual.

Meierle. Ho, chairman! It seems to be the purpose of this gathering to insult me and my Markus. I didn't allow that in Germany and won't put up with it here.

Markus. It can't be otherwise as long as Reb Jossef and his straitlaced, learned Aaron want to be smarter than the entire kahl. Suppose we ask Reb Jossef to resign?

Rosenheim. You can only do that if you provide the old man a salary on which he can live decently.

Markus. Well, agreed! We will pay him that.

Mortche. Take heed, Mister Rosenheim. Markus and Meierle promise it in English and German, but when it comes to paying up they probably won't remember a word.

Meierle. I truly believe that, as long as Reb Jossef has the last word, we won't go forward with the synagogue, Mr. Chairman! How would it be if I try to persuade him to resign his post?

Rosenheim. After you decide and grant him a decent livelihood, a committee will request his resignation.

Markus. That's the way to do business!

Mortche. I believe Mister Meierle and his Markus have taken too much upon themselves. Building a synagogue costs money. Taking care of Reb Jossef costs money. Letting a doktor come from Germany costs money. Where's it all to come from? Mister Markus's promise in English won't even pay the rewosem.

Aaron. May I ask, Mr. Chairman, what the purpose was for calling this meeting?

Markus. We're meeting here to see if we'll build a new synagogue. Reb Jossef is opposed to us, therefore we want someone else in his place.

Aaron. Reb Jossef is not opposed to a new synagogue provided stupid, haughty delusions do not sacrifice the necessary instruction of the children.

Meierle. I already heard that. Who pays attention to it? Reb Jossef wants Aschrei included twice daily in our prayers. Is that fitting for our times?
Aaron. Mr. Chairman! I'll pay $1,000 each year toward Reb Jossef's salary if Mister Meierle, or his son Markus, can convince me that they comprehend correctly the first six lines of Aschrei.

Mortche. Hurry, Markus, say it in German or English, whichever is easiest for you.

Markus. I don't understand what he wants.

Rosenheim. Let's hear from you, Mister Meierle.

Meierle. I often recited the prayer in my youth, but I don't know what it is today.

Aaron. Oh, such insolent, stupid cunning has no equal! They're stuck knee-deep in filth and believe they can blind the eyes of the world when they puff themselves up to appear before it. And besides Meierle wants a grand house of worship. Since when does a blind person reach for eyeglasses?

Rosenheim. You're a smart man, Mister Aaron, and for now we shouldn't place every tiny detail on the scales. We're gathered to discuss a new house of worship. Why isn't this purpose followed?

Meierle. Because so long as Reb Jossef has something to say, nothing will be accomplished.

Markus. Therefore, let Reb Jossef resign.

Aaron. Reb Jossef is not impeding us in our present discussion.

Markus. Mister Aaron twists and turns so that time drags on, Mr. Chairman. I move to adjourn.

Mortche. Seconded.

Rosenheim. Before we adjourn, shouldn't we determine when we'll come together again?

Meierle. When we come together again, a committee will be appointed to request Reb Jossef's resignation. The matter of the synagogue will resolve itself.

Chairman. The meeting is adjourned.

* * *

Reb Jossef was duly informed about the events of the inconclusive meeting. His friends, among whom we momentarily miss Aaron, lost no time in telling him everything faithfully. Each one, out of benevolence, had a different plan ready to assure Reb Jossef his independence but arm him with the power to take drastic action in this matter. He discussed the significant steps with his children, and Simon urged his father to resign from his position on account of his advanced
The old man replied to his son that such action "would put dismal lines in my record. You know that I have led and nursed this congregation with much pain and care so that upon your return from the yeshivah in Germany you can seize the shepherd's staff infirm old age is removing from my hands. How happy I'd be to see that, my son! Gladly then I'd descend to the tomb of the fathers."

Simon. You're going to live long, Father. You're going to live long and see your wish amply realized. I'll complete my studies with redoubled zeal, like you, I'll endure and persist — if only for love of you! Must then a man in his work always pluck life's blossoms on thorny paths — and if you still want it, must it always happen here in E.?

Reb Jossef. Think with confidence beyond the earthly in your position, my Simon. You are healthy and have enough for life. You labor for God and country to instruct human beings, to gladden the soul with reason in speech and writing, and finally to give our Judaism today the well-earned wreath which hovers before your eyes as a real picture. Your foot will never complain about the thornpricks of this earth. Believe me, my son, I speak from experience.

Simon. Even without the last observation I would have believed you, my Father. I'll gladly affirm that a man who doesn't want in body, soul, and reason to be forgotten by his fellow human beings must be ready to bear the treasures of a century, but on that account I don't have to return to E., to stick to this clod of earth until the clod itself rolls over my coffin.

Hannchen. Father wants to spend his old age in E. Don't embitter him with all these words, dear brother.

Simon. I want that as little as you want it, my sister. I can love Father anywhere and live under any circumstance and be content with it. But the grateful Jews in E. want to see him out of his position. Isn't that reason enough to beg him to resign his post?

Hannchen. You'll see, Simon, the situation will end this way: They'll hire another clergyman, who'll be subordinate to Father.

Simon smiled. Reb Jossef was in the midst of a lively conversation in this spirit when Rosenheim entered.

Reb Jossef. Welcome, Mister Rosenheim. Please sit down next to me.

Rosenheim. Reb Jossef, I have the task of informing you that next Sunday, at the congregational meeting, a committee will be appointed to ask you to resign your position.

Reb Jossef. If the congregation feels this will best serve its purpose, so
be it. 

Rosenheim. The congregation is sharply divided in its views. If you’ll yield a little, Reb Jossef, everybody will be reconciled with you.

Reb Jossef. I’m glad that the decision is still in my hands. If it’s not in my power, then I’d be subject to the pangs of my own conscience.

Rosenheim. It still revolves around your view that the erection of an expensive house of worship will neglect the education of our children.

Reb Jossef. Never, Mr. Rosenheim. Nobody can lust after fresh, red cheeks, if he uses children’s blood to color.

Rosenheim. You’re my superior in speech and thought, Reb Jossef, and out of respect for you I withhold any objection; but I don’t like your leaving your post, and still a committee will shortly force you to do so.

Simon. If my father resigns his position, who will lose the most: my father or the congregation?

Hannchen. And if my father lives in peace and under God’s protection in the arms of his children, while the congregation wants to storm heaven in its colorful furnished synagogue and crush the souls of its children — who then will gain the most: my father or the congregation?

Reb Jossef. Let it be, children. Mr. Rosenheim deserves our thanks because he informed us of what’s to come, and he knows enough now to convey my decision to the congregation.

Rosenheim was devoted to Reb Jossef’s family and departed with a sad heart. The news that Reb Jossef might be dismissed proved a true sensation throughout E. The talented old man, who in his work during three decades had desired only the good and had accomplished good, had warm friends in every church, and they stood in the way of Meierle’s attempt to turn even his members against Reb Jossef. Aaron in particular kept an untiring eye on Meierle and Markus, which was probably why he hadn’t visited Reb Jossef since the last meeting.

* * *

Sunday approached; first, of course came the Sabbath, on which day Reb Jossef was accustomed to give an apt sermon in honor of God and Israel.

Friday evening, after services, Markus visited his friend Wendel. The heart of this faithful son of the Apostle Peter skipped a beat when he thought about the scenes that would transpire among the Jews the next day! Markus on entering told him that Reb Jossef, without wait-
ing for the congregation’s decision, would perhaps announce his res-
ignation in his morning sermon. This appeared an unwelcome sur-
prise to Wendel, who had looked for profit from the hoped-for dis-
unity among the Jews. After some thought he remembered: “Do you
really believe, Markus, that Reb Jossef will gladly and willingly surren-
der his post, without the congregation’s urging?”

Markus. If I believe it or not. What his friends want, they won’t tell me, and I don’t care much about it.

Wendel. I fear, Markus, you won’t be able to carry out your original intention. You’re still a Jew and the Holy Spirit, which was revealed to the three wise men in the manger by the Redeemer of mankind, has not touched your heart. As a Jew you’re not cunning enough. Why don’t you try with your inborn Jewish craftiness to pierce through your opponents’ plan and take steps accordingly?

Markus. Because my opponents with their inborn Jewish cunning may carry out my plan, and when a holy ghost in the manger shows me something, I usually see only cows and oxen. I can’t see nothing else.

The priest dropped to his knees on account of the Jew’s stubborn-
ness and recited an ardent prayer for the conversion of this lost soul.

Markus wanted to leave. Wendel, however, realized that his friend
was in an angry mood and held him back. “See, Markus,” he began,
“the heart of man is evil from youth on. He must be reborn. A new
heart will be given him as soon as he finds in the blood of the
Crucified One the forgiveness of his sins. He who is reborn in Christ
calls this his rebirth. How do you, Markus, understand the meaning of
rebirth?”

Markus. If a woman presents you with a second child, I call that present
a rebirth or another birth, and nothing else.

Wendel. If you comprehend holy maxims in a carnal sense, then I can
forgive you even though you attempt to insult me. The true Christ,
born of God, willingly took up his cross, so that in his soul he could
open to a voice, which, as once to our Savior, called out to him: “This
is my beloved Savior in whom I delight!”

Markus. A voice about which I never heard previously, and which I
neither grasp nor know, seeks to take advantage of me, though without flattery it wouldn’t dare promise me anything. I don’t like that kind of business.

Wendel. Has Reb Jossef not been able even to impart to you a Jewish
belief that there is a God in heaven?

Markus. The belief in heaven and in an almighty God the world owes
to the Jews. It is therefore not difficult to teach Jews what they've taught others. I believe you know that.

Wendel. So long as the heart remains stubborn, this belief cannot possibly impress a person. I've abundantly experienced that in my work. Markus. That probably stems from the fact that to the unique, genuine Jewish God you want to add the carpenter Joseph, his son, and the Virgin Mary. My heart's too small for such a big mischpoche.

Wendel sank into his armchair and was suddenly very quiet. Markus left. As he stepped out the door, he encountered Emilie, who entreated him to come to her room. "You spoke somewhat harshly to my uncle, Markus," she remarked. "May I hope that it will lead to your salvation and benefit!"

Markus. Hope what you will, Emilie. I do the same.

Emilie. What if these wishes are delusion?

Markus. There's nothing new under the sun, says Solomon the wise one, and I believe that the old gentleman is right.

Emilie. I like you, Markus, very much, and if through my uncle you find faith in the blood of the lamb's atonement, one day perhaps you'll draw closer to my heart.

Markus. I've resolutely made room for you in my heart. Why don't you do the same rather than make conditions? That isn't fair.

Emilie. Because through your conversion my soul will be able to unlock heaven, and as long as the Jews in E. cling to Reb Jossef all entry is denied the Savior.

Markus. Reb Jossef will probably resign his post tomorrow. If the Savior doesn't know yet how to come to the Jews, don't blame me for it.

Emilie. When Reb Jossef is retired, will you build a resplendent synagogue? Oh Markus, do you love me?

Markus. I just now wanted to ask you the same question. Isn't that curious?

Emilie. And if I said yes —

Markus. Then I'd know what I've long suspected. Sure enough, good night, Emilie.

He offered his hand and left.

* * *

A vast crowd of Jews and non-Jews filled the synagogue in E. the next morning. The mizwes of the Torah scroll rose exceptionally high in
price and practically all were made in Reb Jossef’s honor; even his opponents sought to show generosity. After the return of the Torah scrolls to the ark, Reb Jossef, as was his custom, stepped up to the rostrum. This man had the praiseworthy habit of preaching on his text for no more than thirty minutes, which was perhaps the reason his listeners drank the words of his lips with true satisfaction. After a short prayer, he read his text from I Kings, chapter 6, verses 11 and 12:

"Then the word of the Lord came to Solomon, 'with regard to this House you are building— if you follow My laws and observe My rules and faithfully keep My commandments, I will fulfill for you the promise that I gave to your father David.'" Reb Jossef based his sermon on this text and began:

"The God of Israel, my dear ones, Whose goodness and condescension to His people know no bounds, allowed the time to come, when He permitted Himself, so to speak, to be domiciled among us and the restless spirit of the great Solomon, the wisest among the wise, the wealthiest among the wealthy, intended to build a house on earth for our God, which in magnificence, splendor, and worth surpassed everything human hands had created until now. A fantasy, a force which few men possess, painted the Temple of the Lord, dazzling and gleaming before Solomon’s eyes, so that dwelling on notions of his golden Zion, he believed the God of the Fathers was reconciled with His people.

"The construction of the Temple from its inception was scarcely reflected on, thought out and planned when he began completing it in all of its magnificence. As the force of conceit was reflected in the glance of the king, there came to him a voice from above:

"'This is the house which you are building. It’s not vain glitter and tinsel, sham work and colorful ornament, as you thought, that will be enduring supports for My House. On the contrary, this is My House that will for centuries defy the storms of passing times.

"'If you follow My laws and observe My rules and faithfully keep My commandments.' How plain, comprehensible and clear, my dear listeners, is God’s true expression of His wish as to how He wants His house to be built! And why don’t we conduct ourselves accordingly? Is it so difficult to grasp the laws, rules, and commandments which virtue and common sense demand of us? Building a house of God at great expense only proves to our God that we are rich. Doesn’t He already know that? Why build a palace to the Creator of all things — often as an insult to and in neglect of the poor among us — the
Creator who, according to His holy words, which we just read, does not require it of us? Who gives the dusty worm the right to be disagreeable to God?

"This is the home which you are building — 'if you follow My laws, and observe My rules and faithfully keep My commandments,' so speaks the God of Israel today and always to us. Therefore, if we want to build a house to God, we must follow His laws and commandments. Considerable sums will surely be left over after the building of a pleasing and plain house of God — why, then, not use the money for the education of our minds and hearts? Let knowledge and progress gain entrance among us and serve for the instruction of our children, and let this pulsating artery of Judaism strengthen life's nerves and the general public! It is ignorance which, under any pretext, causes truth to give way. In you rests the essence of all laws, all rules and commandments of an eternal and unchangeable divinity. Whoever doesn't grasp this will see in a house of God of any kind something without plan and purpose, and only when the Eternal Judge offers him a modest house of four boards in cool earth will he cease in this error.

"Solomon grasped the warnings of the Eternal. In all of his prayers, while work progressed on the Temple, he begged his God to allow him to follow in the paths of his father so that through observance of God's laws God's blessing would come upon him. Thus it appeared close to the heart of the king as indicated in the final sentence of our text.

"So will I fulfill for you the promise that I gave to your father David. Should, however, the son through some crime risk losing God's blessings, which were promised on his behalf to the father? Look how Solomon honors his God by devoting seven long years to the building of a Temple, whose walls abound with splendor and gold. Isn't it true, my dear ones, that such a son ought to be the parent's comfort and pride, such a son, who knew more than all contemporary scholars together — still he's like us, of a similar nature. He used art and money and luxury in rooms in which the God of Israel promised to dwell among us. God never looked to external appearances and always into the heart of human beings. The beautiful which so charms the eye frequently degenerates into the ugly and repugnant! Behold and learn, my dear ones, Solomon, the wisest, most insightful, and happiest of all kings before him, died as a common criminal, and while he wasted endless luxury on the building of a house of worship, he raised a son
who brought on Israel's downfall! Need I with this admonition from above add something further? Need I here hurt and wound the hearts which I am accustomed to bring near to God?

"Oh, You almighty God! Who now — I feel it in my soul! — so mercifully and graciously look down upon us, keep before our eyes always and everywhere the thrilling address of Solomon as we contemplate educating our children. And if You wish that a house shall be erected for Your glorification in our midst, so let the marks which the iron cuts into the stone be turned into our text today: 'This is the house, which you are building: If you follow My laws, and observe My rules and faithfully keep My commandments, I will fulfill for you the promise that I gave to your father David.' Amen!"

The cantor continued with the final prayers. The service had not come to an end when Reb Jossef found himself fully encircled by the members of the congregation. His friends proudly pressed his hand in gratitude for the truth he had proclaimed; the women cried and even his opponents drew near with respect to thank him.

On the way home Meierle remarked to his neighbor that the sermon had been "neither fish nor fowl" and it still wasn't clear whether or not Reb Jossef would resign. Markus, who at the exit door had seen the women in tears, said to Mortche that he never believed that women would cry over the resignation of Reb Jossef. "But," he opined further, "it wasn't necessary for Reb Jossef to take the matter so seriously. Why didn't he preach as usual? Why didn't he resign? Don't take it so hard, ladies."

Mortche. Did you understand Reb Jossef's sermon, Markus? Or did you fall on your head?
Markus. I understand him as well as the others and that's how I orient myself. He spoke German, and I only half understand that.
Mortche. I imagined that. Go home and and receive the benschm, Markus.

* * *

Visiting one another on Sabbath afternoon in traditional fashion, the congregational members spoke of Reb Jossef's sermon, whose important content, all agreed, penetrated deep into the heart. The persuasive shepherd of souls was quite convinced of the truth of his views, and the appropriate Bible text he had used and preached so skillfully had the effect of pushing to the wall all poor, rich, and nar-
row-minded favor-seeking individuals in the congregation. Had they learned from the sermon to become better people? Unfortunately, even today there are individuals, whom the very gods won't try to convince, despite the fact that transmitting the simplest idea is at times not too difficult.

Markus rushed to Wendel. After he told him that Reb Jossef had delivered an impressive sermon, but said nothing about resigning his post, the pastor was beside himself. He began, "If Reb Jossef, who you thought would resign tomorrow, could deliver an impressive sermon today, then you certainly don't draw your judgment from that fountain from which the water of life flows for the believer."

Markus. Even the patriarchs, good Jews that they were, dug wells on their pilgrimages. What more do you want?

Wendel. Do you recall, Markus, that Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, stood praying at this well as Rebecca drew water for him?

Markus. Rebecca drew water for camels and donkeys. That has nothing to do with Reb Jossef.

Emilie joined them. The beautiful girl trustingly seated herself next to Markus and asked: "Will a new synagogue be built soon, Markus?"

Markus. First we must resolve the matter of Reb Jossef. Tomorrow we’ll meet for that purpose. After that we’re all right.

Emilie. Until you’re able to accomplish it, a lot of time will pass. Come, Markus, come with me to church where you’ll receive a blessing and become mine.

Emilie was distressed. She really loved Markus, but anxiety bred inner reproaches as she expressed her feelings in Wendel’s presence. Wendel for the moment appeared distracted and left the room. Markus, thick-skinned though he was, couldn’t help observing the girl’s inner struggle and mercifully kept quiet.

Emilie. Why does it appear so difficult for you to get rid of Reb Jossef, Markus?

Markus. We’ll see it happen tomorrow. Sure enough.

Emilie. I wish, Markus, you wouldn’t be Jewish. My heart is tormented with worry for your soul.

Markus. If I could give an order to your heart, I would say to it: Stop that, mind your own business.

Emilie. When I think about the blood of the lamb, which flowed for the salvation of mankind, and I reflect upon your condition, what shall I tell myself about you, Markus?

Markus. When I think about the blood of a lamb, I think about mut-
ton meat. Just think the same.

These crude, thoughtless retorts hurt Emilie. She threw him an angry look and left. Markus saw her leave with regret; he was not indifferent to the girl.

* * *

Sunday came and the congregation assembled. Almost every member was present. After the meeting was declared open, Mortche wanted to have the purpose of the meeting mentioned anew and remarked: "At the last meeting, several members now present were absent. It is therefore only fair that they should know what transpired here."

Meierle. The whole congregation knows that we meet here in order to appoint a committee to seek Reb Jossef's resignation. Practically all members are here, which proves that the congregation is pretty much agreed.

Aaron. It would also prove the opposite. Reb Jossef has friends.

Markus. With your convoluted expressions, you manage to prolong the deliberations, Mr. Aaron.

Aaron. If Mister Meierle is agreed that Reb Jossef, even without his position, receive his current salary, I'll support the proposal.

Meierle. If Mister Aaron will not support my proposal, there are other people here. Mister Süsel, do you support my proposal?

Süssel. Supported.

Aaron. What's this? At an open meeting you search out people for your cause, Mister Meierle?

Meierle. Not so, but I know Mister Süsel. Mr. Chairman, may I request from you that you appoint the committee?

Chairman. I appoint Mister Aaron, Mortche, and Meierle as a commit-tee to ask Reb Jossef to resign his position.

The meeting reached a stage of excitement. The opponents of Reb Jossef felt themselves disadvantaged and sprang to their feet.

Aaron. I propose adjournment.

Mortche. Supported.

The meeting was adjourned.

On the following evening Mortche took himself to Aaron. Aaron felt it advisable not to break with Reb Jossef's opponents but agreed with Mortche not to provide any serene hours for Meierle.

The following day the committee went to Reb Jossef, who greeted
them with a hearty handshake and with affectionate friendship.

Mortche sought to separate himself from his colleagues even before one word was spoken. He seated himself by the window next to Hannchen, who was embroidering a dress. Hannchen wanted to engage him in conversation, but he silently took a pipe from his side pocket and smoked like a Turk without regard for the girl. Hannchen soon left the room. Aaron was silent, and Meierle, although the matter lay heavy on his tongue, was quiet, because he believed Aaron was the spokesman. Finding himself mistaken, he remarked to Mortche: “Mister Mortche, we’ll have to seek your counsel, in order to convey to Reb Jossef the purpose of our coming here.”

Mortche shrugged, turned his back to Meierle, and muttered half aloud, but audibly:

"בעם על-המה נפשי בקהלם אל-תוה כבר.
"

Reb Jossef looked up when he heard these words and Meierle, who hadn’t understood Mortche, begged Aaron to explain.

Aaron. Mister Mortche was quoting a portion of the sixth Hebrew verse of the forty-ninth chapter of the First Book of Moses. In answer to your question, the verse in German would be: “In their council my person will not enter, My being will not be joined to their company.”

Meierle. Mister Mortche! If you don’t want our counsel, why did you allow yourself to be appointed a member of this committee?

Reb Jossef. If my friends visit me as a committee, they are indeed welcome.

Meierle was displeased with this beating around the bush, which delayed getting to the committee’s purpose. He remarked in a screeching tone: “I’m sorry, Reb Jossef, we’re here to request that you resign your position with our congregation.”

Aaron. If Mister Mortche with his words persists in his views, then the committee is not complete and your request to Reb Jossef, Mister Meierle, lacks any official character.

Meierle, taking no notice of this objection, declared further: “What we want here, Reb Jossef, is to tell you that we want to obtain a new preacher from Germany.”

Aaron. What you say now, Mister Meierle, doesn’t belong to our mission.

Meierle. Mister Mortche, you know that one can rarely get Mister Aaron to agree. Therefore, I beg you to say in front of Reb Jossef that we in the congregation have declared ourselves ready to bring a new
preacher from Germany.

Mortche calmly took his pipe from his mouth and murmured to himself:

"על התורה מעמדם והם הנה את ה Clarence W. Leavitt, University of Wisconsin, Madison. These engagements have enabled him to gain a unique perspective on the cultural and social contexts of his work. His research focuses on the interplay between religious and secular institutions in the early modern period, with a particular emphasis on the role of synagogues and the influence of Jewish intellectuals. Leavitt's work challenges conventional narratives by highlighting the dynamic interconnections between different segments of society, demonstrating the complexity of the historical forces at play. His approach to research encompasses both archival and fieldwork, allowing him to explore diverse sources and engage with a wide range of perspectives. The University of Wisconsin, Madison is known for its rich academic resources and vibrant intellectual community, which provide an ideal environment for Leavitt's endeavors. His contributions to the field have been recognized through various awards and grants, underscoring the significance of his work. Through his research, Leavitt aims to broaden understanding of the historical processes shaping contemporary Jewish communities, thereby fostering a more nuanced appreciation of the challenges and opportunities facing these societies today.
stock at this moment. That you want to sacrifice our blossoming school to your “beautiful, respectable synagogue” and that you want to disgrace our children by passing on your ignorance, that is a presumption for which one day Judaism will seek bitter revenge from you.

These remarks must have touched sensitive spots in our Meierle. Half aloud he answered: “Let us bring back our decision to the congregation that Reb Jossef shall continue with our children’s school as heretofore. If he wishes and if the congregation is in agreement, I shall be delighted.”

Aaron. Do you hear, Mister Mortche? Mister Meierle is well disposed to making our decision unanimous in favor of the future instruction of children under the supervision of Reb Jossef. Declare yourself, Mister Mortche. You’re hearing that Mister Meierle is happy in the matter.

Mortche, in his accustomed manner, murmured:

“נעשתו בחשד חורודין חורודין מיף על איבוד מזרים.”

Like one possessed, Meierle sprang from his seat and growled: “How is it Mister Mortche, that just now nothing comes from your tongue but Gemohre, Mischnajes, or the dumb Schulchen Aurech?”

Mortche did not permit his composure to become rattled. He followed with his eyes the smoke of his pipe, and as he followed the ringlets he shrugged his shoulders and remained silent.

Aaron. Compose yourself, Mister Meierle. Mister Mortche spoke no evil, and if he spoke the truth, he doesn’t have to excuse himself.

Meierle. But, Mister Aaron, I don’t know what he spoke, and as long as I don’t know what he says, how can we as a committee come to an understanding? If the congregation wants the instruction of its children to remain under Reb Jossef’s direction, I’m very happy. Can’t Mister Mortche approve that?

Aaron. Yes, it’s on account of your joy that he cites the text from the Second Book of Moses, chapter eighteen, verse nine, which is clarified in the Midrash, which rendered in German reads: “And Jethro rejoiced! Spikes, spikes pierced his heart. He felt wounded because of the downfall of Egypt.”

Meierle. If only this Midrash had remained for me and other people unspoken! Mr. Mortche, I belong to the committee and forbid you to offend me! Do you hear?

Mortche mumbled again:

“מי شמע לראה như רשפ טלחוה?”

“What?” shouted Meierle agitatedly. “You seek through your crazy
insinuations and learning to insult me again!”

Aaron. Mortche has, as far as I know, no intention to insult you, but his remarks glorify truth.

Meierle. Shouldn’t Mister Mortche be polite enough to use a language that I understand?

Aaron. Shouldn’t a Jew of our day, who doesn’t comprehend Mister Mortche’s biblical references, be ashamed of his own limitations and come to offer help rather than urge the congregation to go forward with a “beautiful, respectable synagogue”?

Meierle. You can reproach me as much as you like, but it won’t bring us a hair’s-breadth closer to the goal. Can’t you say in German, Mister Mortche, what you just said in Hebrew?

Mortche shrugged, relit his pipe, and was silent.

Meierle. Would you, Mister Aaron, be so good as to explain Mister Mortche’s words?

Aaron. Mister Mortche cited the second chapter of the Second Book of Moses, the beginning of verse fourteen, which in German would be: “Who has placed you as superior and judge over us?”

Meierle. Nobody! I simply said that I belong to the committee and didn’t want to be insulted by Mister Mortche. Why don’t we finish the task the congregation imposed upon us, so that we can render an adequate account?

Aaron. Nobody will disturb you, Mister Meierle, if you want to carry out this obligation. You pressed for the appointment to the committee. You are therefore our spokesman.

Meierle approached Reb Jossef and began guilelessly: “Reb Jossef, it affects me unpleasantly to have laid claim for so long to your time and patience. We are here as a committee, to entreat you to resign your position with our congregation. Our new preacher shall always and above all think of you with respect and love.”

Aaron. There was no mention by the congregation of what the new preacher has to do. Your additional comment, Mister Meierle, has therefore no official standing.

Meierle. Is there something wrong if the new preacher has to respect Reb Jossef?

Aaron. No! But even if the congregation accepts this anticipated wish, it may indeed be welcome in time.

Mortche.

“rikep mell–harsh tul–mitzrim asher la–dodo at–yomk”

Meierle clenched his right fist and ran toward Mortche, shouting: “So
will I not leave this room healthy, if I tolerate this from you any longer. You—"

Aaron rushed toward him and remarked: "But, Mister Meierle, Mortche’s remarks were intended for me, he spoke to me! Does there lie in this boorish gesture a hint of respect for Reb Jossef, whose goodness and patience you’ve misused so barbarously? Even if the remarks were intended for you, as a committee member I have the right to know!"

Aaron. True. That you don’t know is no one’s fault but your own ignorance. Mortche’s words came from the eighth verse, first chapter of the Second Book of Moses and can be rendered in German: “There arose a new king in Egypt, who did not know Joseph.”

Meierle. Stupidities! If the entire congregation wants the new preacher to respect Reb Jossef, he’ll have to respect him. The people are king in America.

Aaron. I have a proposition to make, Mister Meierle. The committee has through you brought everything to Reb Jossef’s attention—in fact, has communicated more than what the congregation charged us to do. Let’s leave Reb Jossef some time to take counsel with his family and then soon inform us in detail. Are you satisfied with that?

Meierle. Yes.

Aaron. And what do you say, Mister Mortche?

Mortche mumbled to himself:

"ירبرمج כל-เหม אמן"

Meierle cast a malicious glance at Mortche but kept silent. The committee withdrew.

* * *

Soon Aaron returned to Reb Jossef. The worthy old man related to his children what had transpired, and as Aaron entered, the matter was rehashed anew. After recounting Mortche’s striking jokes, which elicited hearty laughter, the plan and purpose of the committee were carefully discussed and considered; they came to the following conclusion. Reb Jossef would resign his position, yet receive his salary as before. The new preacher should consult Reb Jossef on religious and educational matters, and Reb Jossef’s rulings would be binding, provided the congregational majority did not object.

While Meierle was carrying out the committee’s task at Reb Jossef’s, Markus visited his friend Wendel, who was seated to hear confession.
Emilie was sick and confined to her room. Markus, who under such circumstances felt uncomfortable, wanted to leave, but Emilie, who had heard him, requested through her housemaid that he see her.

"My dear Markus," she sobbed, "I'm really sick — which always presages death. Ah, Markus! Can you comfort me?"

Markus. In this case, I'm the one who needs consolation, not you. Emilie. But, Markus, I warmly love you, but must depart from you. Markus. Don't tell me you love me, because I must feel it. Tell me constantly that you're going to depart from me, for as long as you say that you haven't left me.

"My heart belongs to you," said Emilie tearfully, "but my soul wants to be married to the Savior."

Markus. Is the marriage of your soul to the Savior, or the fact that your heart belongs to me the reason for your complaint?

Emilie was silent. After a while she grasped a picture of the Virgin Mary and remarked: "Here, dear Markus, swear by this Holy Mother of God, that you won't marry after my death!"

Markus. And can you believe that the Holy Mother of God, who was herself several times mother, would accept such an oath from me? I don't believe it.

Emilie. So vow to me by the holy angels that to honor my memory on earth you fully renounce matrimony.

Markus. But such a holy angel stood in a trusting relationship with the Virgin Mary. How could I place such a pledge before it?

Emilie. Ah, Markus! The world has bound you to carnal pleasures, and I'm dying without seeing you improved.

Markus. When the time comes for me to die, I'll be compelled to see that in other people.

Emilie. And still I want to be healthy in order to bring you to Jesus and to live with you.

Markus. Jesus' end was the cross. You don't have to bring me to that.

The physician entered. He found Emilie unusually agitated and forbade her all further speech.

Markus found himself in a painful situation. In his dulled and shallow feelings, a triumphant force of love toward Emilie manifested itself. In spite of all his steely determination, which could be detected in his words and jokes, Markus for a considerable time was not at peace in his heart. In Emilie's beautiful eyes he found his soul lifted up, but in Emilie's words he became aware of his faith and he realized that his God was being dishonored. How silly this uneducated, unread
man must appear to us! How much he’s learned from assimilationists among today’s Jews so that heart, feeling, and verbal understanding can triumph in him over soul, godliness, and pure reason.

You love Emilie, Markus. But can your love bring you great pleasure, if — like those assimilationists among some so-called un-reformed Reform Jews — you adopt the Christian belief out of a pure imitation mania and behold daily the fool’s cap before your eyes?

Markus tried not to betray his feelings to the girl and withdrew with a serious and telling glance.

* * *

The congregation assembled on the appointed day in order to hear from the committee the result of their mission. While Aaron and Mortche were still present, Meierle could be seen in the vicinity of the chairman, but much to the displeasure of the curious no word passed his lips. After Chairman Rosenheim noticed Aaron and Mortche in their seats, he remarked: “Gentlemen of the committee, what have you to report to the congregation?”

Mortche. We told Reb Jossef everything that the congregation wanted us to say; Mister Meierle is our spokesman, I leave it to him to further inform the congregation.

Meierle. Yes, Mister Mortche, if you had as a reasonable man used a reasonable language, we would by now have concluded and the congregation would be able to seek a new preacher. Why can’t you now talk, so that we know what you want, Mister Mortche?

Markus. What is it? Gentlemen of the committee, I want to know.

Meierle. Mister Mortche intentionally used a language at Reb Jossef’s that I did not understand.

Aaron. Excuse me, Mister Meierle. Among Jews one should be able to take for granted a little knowledge of Hebrew. Mister Mortche could justly say what he wanted; your not understanding him can be blamed on the fact that you learned nothing in your youth.

Süssel. Did you understand him, Mister Aaron?

Aaron. Very well, and I sought to make Mister Meierle understand him.

Markus. Well, where do we stop? I want to know.

Aaron. Reb Jossef is resigning his post; his current salary he’ll receive for the rest of his life. The new preacher has to obtain Reb Jossef’s
views on religious matters and on the supervision of the children's school, which, unless the majority of the congregation decides against it, shall be binding.

Aaron's words were met with applause. Some shouted: "Rightly so!" Others: "That's what we want!" Among them all, Markus's voice could be heard: "Agreed, Mister Tschierman, agreed!"

From that moment on all disunity disappeared in the congregation. The good people, who agreed with Aaron's explanation on religious school questions, now put aside all disagreements, because they could now find the remedy among themselves. Shortly thereafter Reb Jossef's son Simon asked Aaron: "How can people who don't grasp elementary concepts of their faith arrogate to themselves such responsibility?" To which Aaron answered: "I can fight ignorance and stupidity more easily when I encounter them in life than in matters pertaining to our faith. The essence of faith is that language is impoverished because thought preaches eternal truth and good to the soul. And where did you hear that especially those among us who want to shine stand on secure ground when it comes to thought? I would like therefore to invite you to the table with your own entire product. More than one cook has in his own kitchen quite unspeakably upset his stomach." "Your views may have validity," answered Simon, "but do you believe that nature, as it is found in our congregation, can so easily be broken?"

Aaron. No. Can you foresee that the coming preacher, if he'll do honor to his name, will most likely side with the majority than with your father?

Simon was silent.

At their next meeting the congregation's main concern was to appoint a special committee to search in all parts of the old country for a suitable preacher. Aaron was appointed secretary of this committee, and the necessary correspondence was shortly in full swing. It appeared that in Europe — and especially in Germany — it was considered the highest achievement to wear a Jewish doctoral cap in America, in order to help the noble German Jews there to attain heavenly salvation. Candidates for the preacher position in E. were, therefore, not wanting. These men of God, however, imposed conditions that deeply encroached on worldly concerns, and Aaron had to proceed with caution and care. He offered a very enticing salary but took notice of the candidates only if they could produce recommendations from the most prominent and leading Jewish scholars of the Old
World.

Under such circumstances it wasn't easy to find a suitable shepherd, and Meierle tormented himself with the thought that Aaron was purposely sabotaging the task when a letter arrived that met all the requirements. It was an inquiry from Doctor Juda Jacobi from L., near Munich, whose reputation as an able theologian and a man of modern outlook had preceded him even in this country. The congregation was called in for consultation and Dr. Jacobi's letter was read aloud by Aaron. It said: "To Mr. L. Aaron, secretary of the congregational committee of Rodef Scholem in E. I may perhaps not be averse to accepting the preacher position in your esteemed congregation under the outlined conditions if your congregation could also agree after my death" — here the reader had to cough, but Meierle thought to pick up the thread and added: "After my death, every year on the anniversary of my death, kaddish should be recited with a double minyan of ten men. Something ancient and out of fashion. Not worth anything—"

The reader continued: "After my death, my wife, as long as she remains a widow, is to be paid 2,000 dollars yearly."

Meierle, Markus, Süssel, and similarly minded followers quickly rose: "What!" they cried almost in unison "What! It's not enough that we pay him a salary, with which a dozen living persons can sustain themselves? Does he, when he'll die, want to be paid because he died?"

Aaron attempted to explain to the agitated congregants that the man, whose intellectual gifts and other qualities met their expectations, could not accept their offer without assurances for his inner peace. No objection could be heard, only Meierle murmuring half-aloud as he left: "I worry about money in life so seriously that because of my worry about money in life and in death I've created nothing" — an expression that we'll have to await for the noble Meierle to explain.

The congregation in the meantime went quietly home.

* * *

We return to Emilie's sickroom. The maiden had recovered slowly. Her physician, who was also Reb Jossef's house doctor, entreated Hannchen to take Emilie for a walk. Hannchen was in complete accord with this request, for she had discovered in caring for and comforting the ill her prime purpose in life. The day was pleasant; here and
there in the monotonous gray of the sky the purest blue shone through. As the women with entwined arms joyfully wandered in the nearby forest, they heard the chaffins, those cheerful heralds of spring, warble their most beautiful notes in the branches of the bushes, and these notes answered from the distance. Emilie was overcome by the diversity of nature, and as Hannchen suddenly looked at her, she noted that tears were trickling from her friend’s eyes. “You’re crying, what’s the matter?” asked Hannchen, obviously moved.

Emilie. Ah, Hannchen! As I look at God’s creation, I note harmony, soulful peace, and love. How come none of these smile on me?

Hannchen. No physical pain seems to be bothering you? Tell me, Emilie.

Emilie. Don’t be angry, Hannchen, but have pity on me. I’m in love.

Hannchen. That’s the nobility of being feminine. Why this grief?

Emilie. Because I know in advance that my love will be unrequited and will consume me in its passion.

Hannchen. Be truthful, Emilie. Perhaps I can serve as mediator. What, or whom do you love?

Emilie. I love Markus.

Hannchen. Markus Meierle?

Emilie. The same.

Hannchen. And he disdains your hand?

Emilie. Not exactly, but he won’t submit to my wishes.

Hannchen. Are you close enough to him to persuade him?

Emilie. The gain of such an experiment I’ll gladly leave to others.

Hannchen. If a third person can learn about your concerns, I beg you to entrust your desires to me.

Emilie. I would like to become Markus’s wife if he through baptism will accept my Savior and my Church.

Hannchen. And the silly man, who, if not for such a trifling matter, could bring home as wife the beautiful Emilie, won’t willingly do so?

Emilie. Is it your forbearance for me or are you joking?

Hannchen. Both; as you choose. Has Markus ever requested that you accept his faith?

Emilie. No.

Hannchen. And why are you not equally humane to him?

Emilie. Because my love for him reaches beyond the earthly. It’s his soul, his soul, I want to rescue!

Hannchen. You’re raving, Emilie. The feeling of godliness in human beings, which inflamed by divinity draws ever nearer to perfection,
will come to terms with the soul without your care.

*Emilie.* How can a human being come closer to his God, if he hasn’t found grace in Jesus?

*Hannchen.* What you’re talking about is dogma, dust, or a construct of man’s imagination, which, because Markus is Jewish, will fail to make any impression on him.

*Emilie.* How? What Jesus, his prophets, and God himself spoke, promised, and wrote, that’s dust and mere transient form?

*Hannchen.* The consciousness within me of an eternal divinity has brought near everything that emanates in my comprehension of God, so Jesus and his prophets are of no account to me. Mankind is from God, God is everything, and in this totality everything is obvious. Body and what you understand as soul are only wrappings, means, implements, from the divine in us and don’t belong to us.

*Emilie.* What? For Jews evidently, body, soul, everything ceases after death? Mister Jesus, pardon me my sins! What remains then of the deceased?

*Hannchen.* The human being, the godly self remains. Everything else that comes from the unending treasure of God, created from nature, all that justifies what you and I share in common will return after a transitional period to the limitless treasure. After death, for Jews, only that ceases before the eternal, unique Jewish God which by its very nature is of no value.

*Emilie.* And that’s the teaching to which all Jews cling?

*Hannchen.* It’s a basic principle of Judaism. I can’t speak for all Jews, especially not for your Markus.

*Emilie.* I fear that Markus’s views depart radically from yours. Can you advise me, Hannchen?

*Hannchen.* Pose this question to your beating heart.

Emilie was meditative. On the return home, Hannchen sought to divert the maiden with other matters but only partially succeeded.

* * *

Aaron’s correspondence with Dr. Jacobi was tiring and took up a lot of time. The distinguished gentleman in Germany posed many questions that Aaron didn’t want to answer in detail or was unable to answer. On that account the correspondence came to a dead halt. Quite unexpectedly the news arrived that the doktor’s wife had departed for a better life. Therefore, the vacant position, although not
renounced, suffered considerable delay. After several weeks had passed, Aaron requested in a modest, but serious manner that Dr. Jacobi finally come to a decision as the congregation felt bound to take necessary steps without further delay. With the next mail came the surprising news that the doktor was preparing himself for the journey to America and hoped to arrive on the steamship W.

Meierle and his followers, who quickly spread the news from house to house, also called a meeting of the congregational members to determine how the expected caretaker of souls should be received. A welcoming committee of five young men, including Markus, was appointed. As those elected responded to the call of their names, Markus could neither be seen nor heard.

"I'd like to propose," remarked Mortche, "that we replace Markus with another, since he is probably whiling away his time at Father Wendel's." As Meierle pleaded that the matter be delayed until the next meeting, Mortche withdrew his proposal. Returning home, Meierle guilelessly explained to Aaron: "I don't know, Mister Aaron, but the visitations of my Markus to Father Wendel are beginning to bother me a little. It's quite possible that he's there again. How would it be, Mister Aaron, if in order to get to the bottom of it you would accompany me to Wendel's?"

Aaron. Markus, so it appears, has established a relationship with this maiden. For such delicate matters, however, I have lost my taste. What would I do there?

Meierle. On account of this relationship I should like to examine Markus in Wendel's presence. I'd go by myself, but Wendel so willingly throws his scholarship on holy matters at your neck, and I'm afraid I'm no match for him. Please, for that reason, go with me, Mister Aaron.

Aaron agreed. As they approached Wendel's house, Meierle begged him to remain outside for a while, because it was the hour at which the priest held his family worship service.

Aaron. A worship service, no matter where it takes place, I've never avoided. Therefore, we'll enter.

They opened the door. As they entered, Wendel was singing his Te Deum:

Great God, we praise You
Lord, we extol your strength;
Before You the earth bows
and marvels at Your works
As You were for all times,
so You'll remain for eternity

Now the priest looked up in astonishment and silently stared straight ahead.

Aaron. Don’t be disturbed, man of God. The Jew is gladly present when songs of praise are sung to the “great God.” Please begin with the second verse, if I may request it of you.

Wendel. If you were not a Jew, I’d make the request of you.

Aaron. Since it is I, I’ll honor your request. Please take note Mister Priest:

All that can extol You,
cherubim and seraphim,
raise their voices in songs of praise.
All angels that serve You,
Call to You without surcease:
Holy, holy, holy.

These words deeply affected the priest, and after both men shook hands with great warmth, he remarked to Markus, who approached with Emilie: “Markus, here stands a Jew who pleases Christ and can uplift himself with true divine hymns. Remember that, Markus.”

Markus. You don’t know Aaron, Mister Wendel! Take heed, you’ll soon detect something else. Better ask what he and the other gentleman really want here.

Wendel. If the Jew is willing to honor Jesus, to revere my God in song, what should I ask?

Aaron. And must the Jew acknowledge Jesus prior to singing to his unique God the thrice holy of the angels?

Wendel. If I characterize your deportment as that of a Christian, is that not to your liking, Mister Aaron?

Aaron. I don’t like this designation because it hides a dumb, arrogant self-conceit. Can I not as a Jew desire and accomplish something true and beautiful, just as you do, Mister Pater?

Wendel. Without the belief in and the grace of Jesus’ Church, it’s not possible.

Markus. Better pack up, Mister Wendel! I told you previously, you don’t know Aaron. Better tell him, he may go.

Aaron. I know through hearsay and reading only that Jesus went to his death for his views and assertions. What has made him for you so inconceivably holy and great?

Wendel. His teachings and his Church.
Aaron. Name me only one teaching of your Church which the prophets and talmudic scholars did not preach and defend long before the appearance of Jesus — and I’ll believe you.

Wendel. Your challenge is made rather frivolously, Mister Aaron.

Aaron. So much the better for you. So much the more readily can you meet it.

Markus. The trick was good, Mister Aaron. Go on. Trump it.

Wendel. Take heed, Mister Aaron. The ax is already placed at the roots of the trees. Therefore, every tree that doesn’t bring forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.5

Aaron. Aha! That’s what Mister Jesus spoke, and the saying makes sense, but it’s not original. Before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah said something very similar:

Lo! The Sovereign Lord of Hosts
Will hew off the tree crowns with an ax:
The tall ones shall be felled,
The lofty ones cut down:
The thickets of the forest shall be hacked away with iron
And the trees of Lebanon shall fall in their majesty6

Wendel. You are, therefore, opposed to the assertion that Jesus was both human and divine. From Jesus’ side there is no imminent retribution for you. Love your enemies; bless them that curse you,7 speaks the Savior.

Aaron. That’s right noble minded of the Redeemer, and he probably derived this beautiful thought from Malachi 2:10: “Have we not all one father? Did not one God create us? Why do we break faith with one another, profaning the covenant of our father?”

Wendel. Your remarks are testimony to the truth of Jesus, when he states: “I come not to destroy the covenant, but to fulfill it.”8

Aaron. Correct. How does it stand in this regard with his followers?

Wendel. And what have you against them?

Aaron. His followers have instituted in place of the divinely designated seventh day of rest the first day of the week. Have they “fulfilled” or have they “undone”?

Wendel. The resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place on a Sunday.

Aaron. Granted that it’s true, who gives papists and zealots the right to assail the clear biblical word, which Jesus himself and his disciples did not permit themselves to alter? It was only in the second century after
Christ’s birth that the Sunday celebration began to spread, and the seventh day still continued to be celebrated as the true Sabbath. In the fourth century after Christ’s birth Emperor Constantine decreed the transfer of all Sabbath laws to Sunday and shortly thereafter a fine council forbade all hand labor on Sunday. The worm in the dust tried to surpass not only the master, who came not to undo, but also pushed the great creator of the world into the shadow.

_Wendel._ Christ never elevated himself above the Creator. Testimony to that is the fruit of his belief and the glory of his Church.

_Markus._ When our new synagogue is completed, I wouldn’t give you three cents for the glory of your Church. _I tell you that in time._

_Aaron._ If that’s true, Mister Pater, whom will you defend — the reality, that from the time of Luther until the appearance of Napoleon I, in Spain alone 31,912 Jews and Protestants were burned alive in the name of this faith? Or the bloody night in France when on August 24, 1572, 100,000 Protestants were ruthlessly slaughtered at the instigation of the heads of your Church, all for the ”fruit of this faith and the glory of this Church”? _Wendel._ And you hold contemporary times responsible for the earlier history?

_Aaron._ Only to the degree it’s still grounded in the old history, then it’s also full of blood and lament.

_Meierle._ Mister Wendel! Please be so good and talk of something else! _Wendel._ No! To convert Jews is my profession.

_Aaron._ And how many Jews have you converted, Mister Pater?

_Markus._ In the next family worship service, Mister Wendel will sing:

> “Of converted Jews through papal joke
> Go thousands on one needle point.”

_Meierle._ But, Markus, we know that Mister Wendel has half converted you.

_Markus._ All right, Father. What’s he going to do with the other half? _Emilie._ Calm yourself, Mister Meierle. I’ll be very good to your Markus, and it won’t hurt him if he’ll come over to us.

_Markus._ If it’s going to harm me, I won’t come. _Father knows that._

The bell rang for early mass and urged the priest to go to church.

_Aaron._ Our coming here, Mister Markus Meierle, has doubtless had a disturbing effect on your affair. I beg, therefore, for your forgiveness. Your father will no doubt personally offer his apologies.

_Markus._ I love Emilie. That is my affair. _Anything else?_
Aaron. You love Emilie! Really!

Markus. Can I as a Jew not love the maiden?

Emilie. You love me, Markus. So will I say it freely in the presence of all. But I want more, Markus.

Markus. If I have more, you’re welcome to it.

Here Aaron turned cheerful and remarked: “Let’s go, Mister Meierle. Markus is in the clear with his conscience. You can be at ease. He won’t disgrace you.”

They removed themselves.

* * *

Dr. Jacobi arrived happily in P., and the appointed committee went there to greet him in a dignified manner. In his earlier letters Aaron had recommended to the divine that he visit the house of a friend as soon as he set foot in this country. When the committee arrived, they were surprised by the presence of Dr. Jacobi and his sister. Dr. Jacobi was a man in his prime; he had, as we know, lost his mate and was childless. His sister Frida, a stunning beauty of nineteen summers, won and conquered everyone’s heart, without attaching much value to these trophies of victory. Aaron, in an appropriate address, wished the newly arrived rabbi a hearty welcome in the name of the congregation. After everything else, he did not forget to thank the Giver of all good for the happy arrival of the ardently awaited clergyman and expressed the hope that the doktor would continue to merit heaven’s blessing and protection. The doktor’s reply was brief, all encompassing, and to the point.

On the same day preparations were made for departure. Markus with two committee members hurriedly raced back to E. with the great news and loudly told everyone almost more than they already knew. Meierle and Chairman Rosenheim put on their best clothes and awaited those arriving at the last house of the town. As they finally met, Meierle climbed into the carriage and began thus: “Mister Doctor Jacobi! I extend to you and your sister in the name of the congregation the hand of friendship. You will find in my modest house open hearts and good gifts and I beg, on that account, the honor of offering you lodging.” Dr. Jacobi agreed and Meierle was overjoyed.

That same evening the members of the congregation hurried to Meierle’s to meet the new preacher, to assure him through handshakes and congratulations of their warm friendship and to express
their joy that he had survived the journey without mishap. The doktor had an engaging and comforting word for everyone. The new leader, it appeared, inspired the deepest and most enduring respect — enduring because love and trust clearly stem from the same root. At length, the newcomers requested that they be allowed to withdraw as they were exhausted from the journey, and the visitors left.

The next morning, Aaron appeared early at Dr. Jacobi’s. The latter entreated him that, before undertaking anything else, they must first visit Dr. Rosenfels. Who is Dr. Rosenfels? Where and in what place is he to be found? To these and similar questions, Dr. Jacobi was unable to reply. All he could say was that Dr. Rosenfels ministered to a Jewish congregation in E. or nearby, so it was believed in Europe. The doktor remembered from his youth that his deceased father had been a classmate of Dr. Rosenfels, whose name the senior Jacobi had always mentioned with warmth and affection because Rosenfels accomplished much that was great and beautiful in America, all bringing honor to Israel. Aaron, in spite of the imparted information, was unable to recall such a personality as Dr. Rosenfels. He promised to make inquiries about him among his acquaintances, which comforted the clergyman, and he agreed with Aaron to visit Reb Jossef directly after breakfast. At Aaron’s request Reb Jossef’s Hannchen was to call for Frida, who would remain until then in Meierle’s house.

Markus couldn’t understand why Hannchen had to be the first and chosen one to be with Frida and he hurried to Emilie to convince her to play Jacob’s role with Frida in preference to Hannchen.

Wendel did not share his view and remarked: “We must guide Jews to the cross with love and gentleness and not, as the biblical Jacob had done, with cunning and lentils or obtrusiveness.”

Markus. What? You intend to convert Dr. Jacobi and his sister? Wendel. You can’t start too early, as we don’t know when the Savior will come.

Markus. Dr. Jacobi doesn’t know that either. You bring him nothing new, therefore.

Wendel. If I come to him in the name of the blessed Virgin… Markus. If you come in the name of a virgin, that may succeed, as Dr. Jacobi is a young widower. Try it.

Father Wendel believed that he had again come to an end with his rich salvationary wisdom, and humility directed him to return to his room. Markus knew very well that the priest’s will was law to Emilie, who, quietly and deeply moved, squeezed his hand. He no longer
tried to persuade her to go with him and angrily removed himself.

Dr. Jacobi departed from his older colleague, Reb Jossef, with inner satisfaction but couldn't comprehend why he was unable to give him any information about Dr. Rosenfels. Reb Jossef did observe that the name Rosenfels was not unknown to him, but why hadn't he clarified and elaborated on this? Meanwhile, Sabbath was approaching and Dr. Jacobi had to worry about his inaugural sermon.

Hannchen did not let Frida leave her father's house. Similar sentiments and mutual trust are the true ornaments of a woman's heart. Both girls became friends.

* * *

The following Sabbath gave the city of E. a semblance of true significance. Everybody was intent to hear the rabbi's plan for redemption; Jews and non-Jews filled the space of the synagogue. After Dr. Jacobi had his full share of mizwes, Reb Jossef accompanied him to the pulpit. Following some brief preliminary remarks, the young clergyman began with his prayer:

"Almighty God, All Merciful Father! You who once chose Your servant Moses to be the mediator of your divine will and who called to the timid one: 'Go forth! I'll be your mouthpiece and will tell you what to say.' You who infused Joshua with courage, when, succeeding the most faithful shepherd, he assumed the difficult leadership of Your flock. You who searched out David from his concealment, the youngest of his father's sons, in order that he undertake a great calling and placed on his youthful shoulders the task of a leader of Your people. You who selected Isaiah, the eagle among prophets, touched his lips with fire so that with glowing speech he would inflame the pious and curb defection. You who encouraged Jeremiah, the gentle true friend of his people, when he spoke: 'Ah Lord, my God, I don't know how to speak; I am too inexperienced' and You answered him: 'Don't say, I'm too immature! But go wherever I send you, and speak whatever I command you.' You, Oh Lord, who ever since Your glorious revelation at Sinai inspired with zeal thousands of teachers and guardians with Your most magnificent words so that they might gladly devote their lives to the preservation of Your holy Torah. I stand before You here and pray in glowing devotion. Oh inspire me, the least of Your servants, whom You in Your great compassion have set in this high place, from here to inculcate into many hearts the blessing of Your
fruitful teaching. Oh Lord, my God! I am fully aware of the distance between me and those holy ones of antiquity. Still, along with them, the exalted teacher models of the people of Israel, dare I trustingly raise my eyes to You, because You in a fatherly fashion conveyed me here? Oh surely You will in the future stand protectingly on my side, and as You once instructed Your servant Moses how the house of Jacob shall be taught, so also support me with Your counsel. The holy teaching post which I now enter into with this congregation — let it blossom and become fruitful! May this be Your holy will. Amen."

Now followed the sermon, which was unduly long, on the textual words: "Thus speak to the house of Jacob and proclaim to the sons of Israel."15

"‘Thus speak to the house of Jacob’ is recorded in our text, my dear ones, and our sages add that Moses should speak to the Israelites in a gentle, compassionate, winning manner. And Moses was indeed a soft, fatherly, and trustworthy shepherd of his people. To imitate him shall always be the aim of the teachers of Israel; the contemporary rabbi in particular should bring affectionate love to his profession, so that the congregants can maintain the highest good and peace. If he sees parties ready to oppose each other, if he observes brothers against brothers, parents engaged against children in reckless differences of opinion then it’s his duty not to add fuel to the fire, but he must stand up to reconcile all so that the fires abate. Gentle must be the speech of the teacher of the Jewish folk; great and godly things should he lovingly impart to the hearts of his listeners. Soft is the quill, our sages tell us, but still how much greatness and godliness is recorded with it.

"‘And proclaim to the children of Israel’ admonishes our text, and most ingeniously our sages add: ‘Next to the heart-winning speech, also speak sharp, serious, reprimanding words to them, because they must receive both earnestness and gentleness in their youthful upbringing. Therefore, the education of adults should be reinforced and supplemented.’ And in Moses, both were combined and he became a model congregational teacher; he was gentle and paternally inclined, but also serious and strict, if needed, to abort defection or impose discipline. His words of admonition are gentle and moving and are intended only to achieve good, but his severe lectures are dreadful and terrible. Even his successors, all the prophets, were kind and caring; their speeches were full of sweet consolation for the suffering innocent, but also full of just indignation against disbelief and abusive vice. Zechariah spoke: ‘So I tended the sheep meant for
slaughter, truly! A poor flock! I took two staffs, one of which I named Gentleness, and the other Travail, and I proceeded to pastor the flock." And so shall the contemporary rabbi take in hand two staffs, the one of Gentleness and the other of Seriousness, to keep Israel together when his flock is threatened by ruin and disintegration. He shall not lapse into a saccharine mildness which creeps into the hearts like a shoeless thief — stepping softly and silently in order to steal the good opinion of people, no!

"In these days, where so much rests on the game, and in this lovely land, where, as I have already experienced, the freedom of mind is threatened by the spirit of freedom, the greatest responsibility rests on the shoulders of the rabbi. He must act with seriousness; there are things which must be said even though they are harsh and bitter. In these discordant days, it must be a major concern of the rabbi to win the hearts of the entire congregation and to stand by as a unifier and conciliator of a divided Israel and to bring healing wherever possible. But woe to him who loves only peace for his own sake and for his idle repose, who panders after the goodwill of the congregation, who is indifferent whether, on the one hand, the external religious forms are raised to heaven or, on the other hand, deeply ground into the dust just as long as it doesn't affect his dear person and his gain which he wishes to draw from his position."

In this manner the sermon continued until after an hour the final prayer, which was as ample in citations as the first one, was said. In judging the sermon, opinions were divided. Chairman Rosenheim and Mortche agreed with the rabbi to return home, but comments on the sermon did not remain behind. Aaron and Simon expressed their hearty approbation of the sermon; Siussel thought that the new preacher was searching for balbullim although no member demanded anything from him, while Meierle remarked to Aaron: "It's so true that we have one God, but I already read the entire sermon twenty-five years ago in Frankfurt."

Aaron. You have an extraordinary memory — and that’s something new to me — Mister Meierle. Which Frankfurt do you have in mind? There are some both in the Old and the New World.

Meierle. Which Frankfurt was it, Markus? You studied geography and know it somewhat better than I do.

Markus. If I recall correctly from your earlier stories, it was in Prussia. I can’t say for certain.
Aaron. Correct! When your good memory abandons you, Markus helps with his knowledge of the world. And with that you allow yourself to criticize a scholar? Oh, Balaam, why didn't you discipline the ass more severely!17

Meierle. Why do you again seek to become my teacher with your incomprehensible words? Can't one express an opinion?

Aaron. You can! But the circumstances and the already perceptible evil consequences again point the finger. Ignorance and the desire to ape the non-Jews have evoked indifference to Judaism, and in vain does the noblest among the Jewish scholars fight against this evil so long as you shut out sound counsel. Has the discussion in the congregation taught you anything?

Markus. If you'd let us build the new synagogue, discord would not have arisen. Don't you know that, Mr. Aaron?

Simon pulled Aaron away.

* * *

The congregation met again on the following Sunday. The purpose was to discuss the new house of God, as well as needed reforms in the services. Reb Jossef and Dr. Jacobi were to lead the discussions. The former was indisposed and couldn't leave his quarters while the latter, as he entered the assembly, was offered the chair, which he declined. After Chairman Rosenheim explained the object of the meeting, Aaron remarked: "Mister Chairman! It's probably well known to our distinguished Mister Doctor, who is gracing our meeting for the first time with his presence, that Reb Jossef is opposed to the building of a splendid house of worship because the establishment of excellent schools of instruction for our children appears to him to be more urgent both for the state and for Judaism. I am anxious, therefore, that the honorable Doctor Jacobi inform us where in our services reform is missing and how expediently we can introduce and carry it out."

Meierle: First of all, let's drop the auctioning of mizwes.

Süssel. That will hurt the congregational treasury. I am opposed to it.

Markus. Such damage is detrimental. I am in favor of reform.

Mortche. Mister Doctor! If I may trouble you: Is it proper what Mister Meierle requests?

Dr. Jacobi. Dear brethren, there are so many important issues, which in our old traditional religious practices need to be in harmony, God will-
ing, with contemporary times. Why then spend so much time and so many words on the matter before us?

Mortche. And what does the Mister Doctor imply — ?

Dr. Jacobi. That we abolish the auctioning of mizwes.

Markus. Good. What next?

Markus. Let’s complete the cycle of Torah readings every three years and let’s do away with the calling up of congregants to the Torah.


Mortche. Will Mister Doctor not forget to consult Reb Jossef prior to reaching a decision?

Dr. Jacobi. Reb Jossef, the learned and experienced man, knows as well as we do what contemporary circumstances demand. His points of view don’t stand in the way of mine.

Markus. Mistaken, Doctor, mistaken.

Aaron. Reb Jossef cannot at the present time direct the school’s instruction. I’d like to propose that Simon assume his father’s position and, when needed, Miss Frida Jacobi can undertake the instruction of girls.

Aaron’s proposal met with approval.

Mortche. Without Reb Jossef’s presence the current deliberations should definitely not be continued. I’d like to move for adjournment.

Meierle, Markus, and several others were resolutely against adjournment but were defeated by the majority.

Markus rushed to Wendel in order to let him know what had transpired. As he looked around for Emilie, he noticed that she was bathed in tears. Emilie, so it seemed, had openly confessed to the Pater that she couldn’t and wouldn’t leave Markus, whether he converted or not, and that had provoked the priest, who in all Christian humility made remarks that brought torrents of tears to the girl’s eyes. Hardly had Markus entered when Wendel, pointing to Emilie, made it clear to him: “This weeping is your fault, Jew!”

Markus. Thanks. My next weeping is your fault, Christian!

Wendel. But, Markus, Emilie is seriously suffering. Do you know who’s responsible for that?

Markus. She can better tell you that.

Wendel. Can’t you finally break with your old Jewish God and follow Jesus?

Markus. By such a move I stand to lose and not gain. Seldom does something good follow.

Markus. And that's why you insult me?
Wendel. No! Only because you won't come to Jesus and marry her.
Markus. If I should marry her, I must come to her.

The usually good-natured Christian pastor almost lost his patience and, obviously vexed, asked: "What is the purpose of this visit, Markus?"
Markus. Dr. Jacobi is in the process of reforming our services. When that's accomplished, then we'll build a new synagogue. Don't you want to know that?
Wendel. Naturally it would please me if you finally comprehended true reform.
Markus. We've already come to understand it.

Emilie tried to give the conversation a different direction and asked: "Can you tell me, Markus, when Dr. Jacobi will preach again? I'd like to hear him."
Wendel. I have no objection. Jesus be with you.
Markus. No Sir! I'll be with her.

Markus took his leave. Emilie accompanied him for a short while and remarked: "Markus, I dreamt last night that I'll soon be dead."
Markus. Dreams never killed anybody.
Emilie. In case I die, what can you promise me?
Markus. What shall I promise you?
Emilie. You shall write my gravestone inscription.

Emilie emphasized these words so seriously and deeply, so that even Markus was shaken and cried out: "With my heart's blood!"
Emilie. No! That never belonged to me.
She hurried back to the house.

* * *

Dr. Jacobi earnestly invited Reb Jossef to be present at a gathering on the next Sabbath afternoon, when further reforms were to be discussed — and here it was at the beginning of our story when we found Reb Jossef seated at his study desk and musing to himself: "If I knew that I had something to say at the next Sabbath afternoon gathering, I would gladly accept Dr. Jacobi's invitation. Strange," muttered the rabbi after some reflection, "strange that I torture myself with such a simple request. If I knew! I don't know, and I don't know any better than to know that Dr. Jacobi's views on reform and Judaism don't agree with mine, and I don't feel my soul weeping, but I do see the
innovations requested by the congregation and introduced by Dr. Jacobi. What would be the purpose of my presence at their gathering?"

This gathering did not take place. Dr. Jacobi was confined to a sickbed and suffered greatly.

Simon proved himself a true pedagogue in his new profession and was openly praised at the time of his school exam by the invited members of his congregation and the entire academic constituency of E. On this occasion, Mortche grasped Meierle by the hand and said: "Do you see, Mister Meierle? Here is the synagogue, without colorful decor, without upholstered seats, without pulpit crowns which would have cost thousands of dollars, even without debt. The education of children, the souls of the parents, Judaism, and the character of the congregation itself were saved — a memorial to godly joy, honor, and civic virtue for coming times has been established without causing dissension over the auctioning off of mizwes or ausleienen of the Torah every three years. This is, as you would say, but what you really mean in a different sense: a truly bekowete schuhl!"

Meierle recognized that he did not find himself in what he had envisaged as his congregation, but he had enough tact to keep quiet.

At the end of school, Hannchen almost always invited Frida to tea, and as Simon had to be perhaps an involuntary companion, it won’t surprise the reader that the young man soon lost his heart. Frida, the attractive, educated girl with the rich, flowing hair and enchanting oriental look, became a spiritual mother to her pupils and a model of feminine virtue to the women and girls of E. For such beauty even singers of yore had seized the harp with enthusiasm. Frida, without being aware of or desiring it, was enriched by the conquest of Simon, or so it appeared, which didn’t displease old Reb Jossef. And now, due to her brother’s indisposition, Frida’s constant presence made it obvious there was visibly missing a certain something for Simon, so that Hannchen jokingly remarked: "Does it hurt, Mister Brother? Oh, the nasty Amor sometimes shoots all too rudely."

Simon blushed. He couldn’t find the proper words, as Hannchen called out: "Be quiet, Mister Philosopher; you already answered. Bring near your flame. Make it brief."

The heart was struck and Simon was vanquished. "I’ll truly confess, dear sister, I love Frida. In Frida I find more than an average
human being, but one whose love sets fantasy aflame and chars the heart before the constellation turns pale at the wedding canopy. I find in Frida more than in most human beings."

"Who are almost as good as men," Hannchen interrupted. "Oh, don't get lost in the clouds with your fellow clerics and don't forget that while you're talking to your sister, you also have one of those humans before you, you naughty boy."

Simon. But I speak the truth.

Hannchen. I, too.

Hannchen knew how to draw out a confession from Frida, whether in a concise or a reluctant manner — shall I recount the matter precisely, dear Deborah? You're also a woman and I have to be modest. Enough, before two weeks had passed, Simon and Frida became engaged.

* * *

Dr. Jacobi's indisposition began to cause serious worry. The vigil and nursing at the sickbed demanded considerable time from the congregational members. Hannchen helped bear all the household burdens of her sister-in-law Frida with true sisterly devotion. With punctuality and care she followed the physician's directions, not infrequently sacrificing all nightly repose — all out of concern for the patient. These were soulful gifts to the suffering one, gifts that at the same time opened up and determined his relations in the future. And still Dr. Jacobi believed he had to set his house in order. He had, therefore, summoned the elders and Reb Jossef and communicated the following to them:

"My father," he began, "imposed a task upon me, his only son, just prior to his death, to make inquiries about Dr. Rosenfels, who, it was believed, resided in America in or near E. By noticeable signs, which I can't ignore, nature doubtless will mercifully withdraw from me the onus of a debtor and I'll gladly depart. But one thing you must promise me, Reb Jossef."

Reb Jossef, visibly shaken, understood how to control himself and asked: "And what will that be?"

Dr. Jacobi. In the name of my deceased father, and in the presence of God and these men, I beg you to ascertain the residence of Dr. Rosenfels.
Reb Jossef. And should I succeed, what then?

Dr. Jacobi requested that Reb Jossef reach under the head cushion and remarked: "Here you’ll find a small box that must be turned over to Dr. Rosenfels. Should ten years pass from the date of the inscription on it and there be no sign of life from Dr. Rosenfels, then you — if I’m no longer here — or someone else, whom you appoint, must open the box. My father willed it as his last wish.

Reb Jossef. Did your father of blessed memory delegate you to request this of me?

Dr. Jacobi. No, but, in a serious moment, he made it my responsibility to appoint someone else in my place.

Reb Jossef, who perceived that the patient was agitated, sought abruptly to end the conversation and remarked: “Are you satisfied, Mister Doctor? There awaits you among us a most pleasant and blessed future.”

Weeks passed. Dr. Jacobi’s condition improved, but his complete recovery took a long time. Finally, when Dr. Jacobi was deemed sufficiently strong, Reb Jossef with a considerable number of congregational members betook himself to him, and all were greeted in a most friendly manner. After an exchange of greetings, Reb Jossef handed a letter to the young rabbi, but as soon as he noted the inscription he cried out in pain: “Almighty God! My father’s handwriting!” He read: "My dear Dr. Rosenfels! You are right. You don’t want to shine in America as a doktor. The plain name of your distinguished grandfather who not only rescued Worms Jewry over a hundred years ago, but ennobled and elevated it is sufficient honor and distinction for you. God bless you for that! What you tell me, dear Jossef, is that along with talented Jewish scholars, who, like you, function so effectively for God and Jewry, there are others who have come from Germany and with their entire academic rubbish have settled in Pennsylvania and by the turn of the hand love to blimpify themselves as doktor. Don’t permit yourself to be misled, old classmate. Contemporary times will bring new perceptions, but even in previous times the realization grew that paradise was reached by snakes.

"Your former classmate, Pinches Jacobi."

Paying no attention to the enormous agitation these lines evoked among those present, Reb Jossef opened the box. It contained two rolls of money and a letter with the following contents:

“My dear Reb Jossef! The monies which you so generously sent
me have happily yielded considerable interest. My son Juda was enabled with them to finish his studies and the enclosed rolls, his first earnings as professor at the local seminary, are offered by me in remembrance and with grateful acknowledgment. Whoever cannot after ten years from the given date determine the whereabouts of Doctor Jossef Rosenfels should open this box and utilize the enclosed money for the benefit of a nearby children's school. My noble classmate sacrificed his all in Germany for the public instruction of youth, and I'd like to honor, through this bequest, the name of my friend. This is the wish of a dying person, Pinches Jacobi."

Dr. Jacobi, overcome by his feeling, cried like a baby and fell on the neck of old Reb Jossef, who almost lost his own composure and cried out: "My rabbi, my friend, my benefactor!"

The event flew like an electric spark through the congregation and had a remarkable effect. In this genuine Jewish act of love, most rediscovered their good old Reb Jossef and paid him homage as before. Since Dr. Jacobi's return to duty, he visited Reb Jossef so often that some know-it-alls were ready to believe that the doktor did not have an unfriendly eye for Hannchen. How the opinion of people often lies in wickedness! Hannchen had been a faithful nurse at the doktor's sickbed, as we already know, and if now, after his fortunate recovery, this man of God wants to express his thanks to her, the profane world questions his heart's intention. Doesn't the recognition of magnanimous sacrifice belong to what is divine in man? Above all, shouldn't the loyal servant of God also be a faithful servant to all that is divine? But in vain! The people in E. couldn't be dissuaded. Dr. Jacobi, according to them, had asked for Hannchen's hand and the old man had given both his fatherly blessing.

*   *   *

Father Wendel was very displeased with the course of events. Since their last meeting, Markus had seldom visited Emilie, so he talked to himself one day: "These stiff-necked unconverted Jews are a most curious phenomenon. They gave us Moses and departed from his teachings; they gave us the belief in one God, yet worshiped the golden calf; they gave us Jesus, and nailed him to the cross; they hate Reb Jossef and engage one who worships him... Oh, you incomprehensible uncouth Jewish people!"
Markus's infrequent visits proved to be unsettling setbacks for Emilie. She, therefore, left the pastor's house and lived with a nearby relative. She avoided appearing in public with monastic stringency; often no mortal could set foot in her room for weeks.

Markus learned with dismay of Emilie's painful loneliness and rushed to see her, but couldn't face her. The once so beautiful maiden had visibly withered; grief and deception, so often the poisons of exuberant blossoming life, gnawed at the oversensitive heart, and Emilie ebbed forever. Markus mourned Emilie, as no one, in similar circumstances, would have mourned a maiden. He observed schloschim and only his father's stern intervention prevented him from carrying on his breast the torn lapel — symbolic of intense Jewish mourning.

Emilie's estate included a letter addressed to Markus that, according to the heading, was to be opened in Wendel's presence. The letter read:

"Dear Markus! No unnecessary grief and no recriminations. You probably recall that you promised to write my gravestone inscription. Do it without delay, but in accord with my uncle. You no doubt will keep your word to a maiden who only meant to do you good.

"Emilie Wendel"

In this letter there was also a small sealed parcel, which Markus quickly broke open. He suddenly turned pale as a corpse. What the parcel contained never came to light. Shortly after the days of mourning Markus sought to carry out his duty to the deceased. He begged Aaron to help him. Aaron wrote:

"Through piety, as God teaches,
Be grateful to Him who grants repose"

Markus rushed to Wendel with this inscription. He wasn't satisfied and insisted that it should read:

"Conversion, as Jesus taught,
Brings repose to souls"

That was not to Markus's taste and he shouted: "No Sir! Better that I myself write the inscription." He wrote:

"Emilie now embraced by God
Lies here torn like a flower"

Wendel was ready with his objection, but Markus did not permit him to utter a word and hurried to Dr. Jacobi with the request that he write the inscription. He wrote:

"Through faith, acquired by virtue,
Both Christian and Jew will be reconciled to God.
Old Reb Jossef’s opinion must not be left out. He wrote:
“The finest monument belongs to him
Who honors humanity in the human being”
Which epitaph is the proper one? Decide, dear reader.

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Glossary

Aschrei — Psalm 145, traditionally recited twice in the morning and once in the afternoon service: an index to the congregation’s piety

Ausleimen — the cycle of readings from the Pentateuch

Balbullim — contentions

Bekowete Schuhl — a respectable synagogue

Benschen — the traditional blessing bestowed by a father on his children after Sabbath services

Bettelhaus — almshouse

Bisiness-Jehudem — Jewish shopkeepers

Fleischig — see Milchig

Gemohre, Mischnajes — Gemara and Mishnah = Talmud

Gohles — the Exile in which Jews must remain perennially separated from non-Jewish society

Heder — elementary religious school

Kaddish — memorial prayer

Kahl — congregation

Medrasch — Midrash, ancient homiletical collection

Milchig and fleischig — dishes required by rabbinic dietary laws for separating dairy (milchig) from meat (fleischig) products

Minyan — traditional quorum (ten adult males) for a prayer service

Mischpoche — family

Mizwes — special honors like reciting the blessings for the Pentateuchal reading during the synagogue service; traditionally auctioned off to the highest bidder as a fund-raising method

Parnass — congregational president

Rewosem — interest on a loan

Schloschim — the thirty days of mourning after a death

Schulchen Aurech — Shulhan Arukh, the authoritative sixteenth-century code of Jewish law

Taufel-emoneh-mischpoche — an apostate family

Te Deum — the opening Latin words of a Catholic hymn of thanksgiving

Yeshivah — school for advanced talmudic studies
NOTES

3. Rashi, a renowned scholar in eleventh-century France.
4. I Chronicles 16:36: “And all the people, Amen.”
5. Matthew 7:19.
7. Matthew 6:44.
15. Exodus 19:3.
18. Instead of the traditional annual cycle.
19. Die Deborah, for which Loeb wrote the story, was Isaac M. Wise’s Cincinnati German-language weekly and was named for the heroine in the biblical Book of Judges.
The innumerable articles and reports that were sent to the European Hebrew press by diligent correspondents in various American Jewish communities continue to cast light on many aspects of American Jewish life. The first modern Hebrew weekly newspaper *Hamagid*, which began publication in Lyck, East Prussia, in 1856, reached subscribers not only in Russia but also the world over. As part of its coverage of world Jewish events, it also carried material on American Jewish life.

It was at the request of the editor of *Hamagid* that Arnold Bogomil Ehrlich sent his correspondence regarding Jewish life in New York. His contribution, entitled *Massa 'Ir va-' Em ba-Aretz ha-Hadasha* (Concerning a Metropolis in the New Land), appeared in four installments in volume 24, issues 11–14, in the section devoted to America. They are dated March 10, 17, 24, and April 7, 1880.

In a previous issue of *American Jewish Archives* (volume 36, number 2, November 1984) I published an article entitled “New Light on Arnold Bogomil Ehrlich.” Ehrlich's correspondence concerning New York Jewry illuminates additional aspects of the struggle of a scholar to eke out a living during a period when the Jewish community was still in a state of flux. In his effort to reestablish himself following his arrival in New York in 1876 he received the support of Dr. Gustav Gottheil of Temple Emanu-El and his colleagues, and he obtained an instructorship in the Emanu-El Preparatory School for the Hebrew Union College.

Ehrlich's correspondence offers an evaluation of the spiritual status of New York Jewry and of the communal attempts to provide for the educational needs of the young. It also offers a description of the Emanu-El Preparatory School, its staff, students, and curriculum. Among the students of the highest class that Ehrlich mentioned were Dov (Bernard) Drachman, who became an Orthodox rabbi; Adam Rosenberg, an early Zionist activist who became a lawyer; and Raphael Jacob (Richard) Gottheil, who taught Semitic languages at Columbia University.

Ehrlich, who earned fame for his Hebrew and German commentaries on the Bible, was also the author of occasional poems in Yiddish
Concerning a Metropolis in the New Land

To the honorable Rabbi, eminent scholar and editor of Hamagid shalom!

I have considered your request and view it favorably. Although I have not taken up the pen of a Hebrew writer for some time, I will communicate through your publication what I know about our fellow Jews in New York where I live. To begin with let me say: I will deal only with the Jewish inhabitants of the metropolis who number a third of our brethren in the United States. The intelligent reader will be able to apply my remarks to the rest of the Jewish inhabitants. Let me also mention at the outset that I will not present a comprehensive review of their civic status and their religious observance. My article will describe mainly how they have forsaken the wisdom of our ancient
sources and how a minority of zealots have tried to defend the honor of our people.

The Jewish inhabitants of the land stem mostly from the poor classes in Germany and Poland, and the Jews of New York are among the most impoverished whose money gave out on their first day here. For lack of funds they could not travel further and they had to settle in the first seaport city in which they landed. These poor people were also poor in spirit. They had not come here to acquire wisdom and knowledge but to provide bread for their families. And even those who in their countries of origin were brought up by their parents to love Torah and knowledge, as soon as they set foot on the soil of this new land they became imbued with a new spirit. Just as the air of Eretz Yisrael makes one wise, so does the air of our country make one clever: and if the wise man is said to have his eyes in his head, the clever one is guided by practical aims. He will therefore not turn to knowledge that can only support him frugally, but will engage in business or any trade that can bring him financial gain.

The inhabitants of the metropolis in which I live are divided into three groupings. One consists of those who are against enlightenment and who are satisfied to observe meticulously everything ancient that is found in the Talmud. The adherents of the second grouping consider themselves to be modern: thus the Talmud is meaningless for them and they believe in replacing the old by the new. The third grouping is like a halfway house whose members no longer belong to the first grouping but have not yet transferred into the second. The members of the first grouping act according to their beliefs while those of the second act without rhyme or reason. The leaders of all three groupings are incompetent and unqualified, so how can their followers know what limits are not to be exceeded? Sometimes they do not reach the proper limits that have been set and sometimes they go far beyond them. For example: going without a head covering and the like is considered a serious transgression, but no attention is paid to the laws of ritual immersion by women. All this is unheard of and is entirely ludicrous. But as I indicated this is not what I want to write about, so I will return to my original theme.

You have been apprised of the fact that our three groupings differ in their views and actions regarding faith and religion. Despite these differences, they are all united in a common quest to engage in business, and their main striving is to gather wealth. Money answers all
needs, and it represents the end all of life. The members of the last two groupings meet here on common ground, for as natives of Germany they know the ways of the world and how to do business. On the other hand, those who belong to the first grouping and stem from Poland are far from being adept at business.

In addition, they do not know the language and they speak haltingly. Thus they are not as successful as the members of the other two groupings. Most of them are poor and even the more affluent do not achieve their full ambition. When they are successful and become wealthy they build elegant homes. However, because they are busy all day they do not rear their children properly. Their evenings are devoted to all kinds of leisure activities and the children are left to the mothers. This is a grievous mistake, for mothers do not command the same respect as the fathers and they gloss over their children's faults. Having pointed out the failings of the men, I would be remiss if I were to overlook their positive qualities. They are honest in their business dealings and are most trustworthy. They fulfill their civic duties and take part in all charitable causes. But because of their wealth they consider themselves wiser than those who came before them, so what need is there for Jewish learning? Silver and gold are their Urim and Thummim and their constant guide. They therefore have their children acquire only a knowledge of the basic subjects and this they can accomplish in the public schools, which are open to all, Jew and non-Jew alike. The schools are maintained by our government, which does not differentiate among religions. There are those who also teach their children Hebrew reading, Bible, and the elements of the Jewish religion. But these are considered to be but supplementary studies. To acquire this knowledge the boys and girls attend the schools maintained by each congregation on the Sabbath and on Sunday when the public schools are closed. I will not venture an opinion regarding these schools because I teach in one of them. These are some of the doings and practices of our rich brethren of all the groupings.

However, our metropolis also contains a few streets in the lower part of town in which there reside the lower-class members of the first grouping. Here the Torah is not neglected, for it is in evidence in every public place, where it is trampled underfoot. Most of the residents are learned, and even the most irresponsible are familiar with Jewish customs and practices. Yet some of the latter do go astray. They borrow money and avoid paying their debts by transferring their property to others. Some try to recoup their losses by setting fire to their
property and collecting the insurance money. Their actions are reprehensible, for they reflect on the entire Jewish community. Yet we cannot disregard this section of the city that is brimming with Jewish life. Here one finds batei midrash (houses of study) where batlanim (idlers) sit and study daily. These batei midrash have rabbis and religious courts that endorse or disqualify ritual slaughterers at will and that ostracize anyone who is not to their liking. The rabbis officiate at marriages and divorces for a price, and they often will encroach upon each other's territory.

Even though these few streets are considered part of New York, they are like a different city, for they remind you of Poland. Anyone who comes here will hear an unfamiliar language and will be overwhelmed by the noise. His eyes will perceive strange sights and disorderly conditions without any overall plan. Unqualified teachers wield their sticks and smoke their pipes. The rancid smoke is felt by anyone who enters and his ears are deafened by the cries of the pupils. The pupils are American-born and speak English, while the melamdim (teachers) use a different language, which the pupils don't comprehend. They feel their heavy hand when they have difficulty in grasping their meaning. And what do these melamdim teach their pupils? The readers of Hamagid already know the answer to this question.

In addition to the hadarim (religious schools) supported by the members of the first grouping, each congregation maintains a school that is limited to its members and that is open only two days a week, as indicated above. Except for these, there was only one community school for Jewish children that was too small to house even a tenth part of the children of the Jewish poor in the city of New York. The reason for this situation lies in the divisiveness of the various groupings. The members of the first grouping prefer their hadarim and melamdim to any others. Those who belong to the second grouping cannot afford to go it alone. Can the combined groupings unite to establish a school of learning that will satisfy their differing views? Meanwhile those children whose parents cannot pay the dues required of synagogue members have no opportunity to study and they grow up without an appreciation of Jewish knowledge.

This then was the status of our brethren in New York and other cities until six years ago, when new conditions made for a change. The new generation of native-born Jews who speak English was no
longer willing to listen to sermons offered by foreign preachers in another language or in broken English. They stopped attending the synagogues on the Sabbath and holidays. The Jewish communities were troubled by this situation and decided to unite under the banner of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. This organization set about to establish a rabbinical school in Cincinnati. Because there was not yet a suitable body of qualified students there was first organized a preparatory school. Such schools were also organized in two or three other cities. When a sufficient number of students were available a rabbinical school was opened.

The head of the school is not distinguished for his scholarship but he is an effective preacher. He also has spiritual strength, which enables him to accomplish much in behalf of the Jewish people and Jewish learning....At the beginning of this year my friend Dr. Mielziner was engaged to teach at the college and because of his sterling character and deep knowledge he will add much to its prestige.

When New York saw what its younger sister Cincinnati did, it decided to follow suit. The leaders of the other groupings who were blessed with means decided to renovate the small building of the Talmud Torah and to expand it. Because most of the members of the first grouping were poor, as I have pointed out, it was decided to abide by their views, so that they would continue to send their children. The sponsors of the enlarged school united under the name of Hebrew Free School Association. Despite its modest beginnings, the association has been successful. There are now six Talmudei Torah under its auspices and the student body numbers 1,200 boys and girls. The budget covers the teachers' salaries and provides clothes for the poorer children so that they need not feel ashamed in the company of their friends.

The curriculum of the schools is similar to that of the congregations but differs in respect to approach. It is more traditional in keeping with the views of the first grouping. Nevertheless, some progress has been made and the policy of the schools now represents an amalgam of the views of the first and third groupings. The Hebrew schools have an advantage over those of the congregations that function only two days a week. The children of the well-to-do are pampered and so will not attend classes on rainy or cold days. The Talmudei Torah are a threefold blessing in our midst, for they are like a fountain of living waters for the students who bring their knowledge home with them.
to their parents. These schools also keep our children out of the clutches of the missionaries who have also opened schools to entice pupils. The Talmudei Torah have created positions for our teachers and have opened a path to Jewish knowledge. When the supervisors and their assistants made their school visits they saw the value of their work and underwent a change in attitude. They publicized in the Jewish press the availability of opportunities for Jewish learning. Classes were available in Bible, Mishnah, and Talmud. In order to attract students, prizes were offered for excellence. The response was good, and annually between Passover and Shavuot students assemble to be tested on the year's work. Those who excel receive special awards in the form of books and medals. The contests are held in the following categories: (a) reading and translation into English of the Hebrew prayers, principles of Judaism, and biblical tales; (b) Hebrew grammar and Pentateuch; (c) one of the Prophetic books, Ethics of the Fathers, basic laws in the Yad ha-Hazakah of the Rambam, such as the laws of the Shema and the like. The entrants in the first two categories are pupils from our schools, while those in the third category come from those who study on an advanced level,...

Because of these contests and the honors that are bestowed on the winners, the young people of our city have begun to show respect for our Torah and heritage. When my friend, the rabbi scholar Dr. Gottheil, who is the spiritual leader of Temple Emanu-El, saw that the time was ripe he issued the following call: let us establish a house of study and let us do what we can to attract students. His call was heeded by his members and followers. Temple Emanu-El, which takes a leading role in every important endeavor, has offered to allocate annually $1,000 for this purpose. This took place in the winter of 1877, when a school was established in our city as well under the supervision of Dr. Gottheil and Dr. Adler. The aim of the school is to prepare students for rabbinical school. Its scope of study has now been widened, but it does not have as yet the status of a rabbinical seminary. The reason for this is that at the end of 1879 Temple Emanu-El joined the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and as a result our school came under the aegis of the union. The regulations of the union provided that there be only one rabbinical school in Cincinnati and that a second school should not be organized until its budget was assured.

The students are divided into three classes and the faculty consists of three teachers. The students of the first year study the elements of
Hebrew grammar and the Pentateuch. In the second year they complete their study of the rules of Hebrew grammar and they add to their Bible study one of the books of the former prophets. The third-year students study Rashi's commentary, the prophetic books, and the Talmud. Our school is also closed for the summer months, but when it is in session it meets three days a week for two hours a session. The days of study are Sunday, Wednesday, and the Sabbath. The students of the third-year class meet on a volunteer basis for two additional hours, one on Wednesday and one on the Sabbath. During these two hours they read Rabbi David Kimhi's Sefer Mikhlof and study the elements of syntax.

The students of our school may study with or without head covering, according to their choice. Some follow the wishes of their parents and rabbis to cover their heads when studying the Bible or Talmud, but they participate in the lessons on grammar while bareheaded. The readers of Hamagid will wonder about this. But if they knew the spirit of the Jews of our land they would no longer consider it strange. Here I might add a word about the members of the first grouping and their views, which are so radically different from those of their fellow Jews in Europe. Even our most observant who say daily Ani ma'amim be'emunah shelemah (I believe with perfect faith) etc. have scruples when they come to the belief in the coming of the Messiah which was their source of hope in their countries of origin. Now it is recited mechanically, for their lot is much better than in the past....However, I have promised your readers not to elaborate on this matter and I will keep my word.

Generally speaking, our school does not seek to inculcate any specific beliefs in its students, but rather to teach the wisdom of our Torah and the teachings of our sages.... This is seen especially in our third-year class whose students all study Latin, Greek, logic, and other subjects in the higher schools of our city. At the beginning of the year it was therefore suggested to them, as introductory to the Talmud, to study the differences between biblical and rabbinic Hebrew. They were shown the reasons for these developments, which made it possible for them to understand the usages of rabbinic Hebrew and their variations from the biblical period.

The student body of the school numbers about thirty boys, of which six are in the third class. They are equally divided between those who want to prepare for the rabbinate and those who seek to become
knowledgeable in both Torah and general studies. The highest class consists of the following four students: Abraham Illich, Dov, son of Benjamin Drachman, Adam Rosenberg, and Raphael Jacob Gottheil, son of the rabbi preacher who founded our school. The members of this group have completed our course of study and are preparing for the rabbinate. Because there is no higher institution of learning in our city for the reason I have indicated above, they have begun to study with the following four experts: Dr. Adler, Dr. Kohler, Dr. Gottheil, and Dr. Huebsch. The subjects include Talmud (tractate Baba Batra) the Book of Psalms, the Kuzari, and Aramaic grammar. The writer also teaches these students twice a week, on Sundays and Fridays, the tractate Pesahim with Rashi and the Tosafot.

The reader can now see that the fortunes of Jewish scholarship in our city are better than before, and they will continue to improve in the future. Our brethren feel remorse for neglecting Jewish learning and have changed their ways. Large sums have been expended on the needs of the Talmudei Torah and our preparatory school, and additional funds will be forthcoming. Contributors will see the fruits of their efforts, for the students of the third-year class of our school, in addition to the four young men I have mentioned by name, have shown a desire to study Torah, and their people’s heritage is very dear to them. Besides fulfilling their duty of learning from their teachers, they have shown their love of learning by forming an organization that is dedicated to spreading Jewish knowledge. The society’s name is “Yehudit” and among its members, in addition to the students, are Dr. Isaacs, editor of the Jewish Messenger, and another young man, Nathan Biyur, who has studied regularly at home. The members, headed by Dr. Gottheil, meet twice a month to listen to a paper on a Jewish subject that has been prepared by one of the participants.

The papers that are read can be either original or a review of material (reproduction), depending on whether it is presented by a scholar or one of the young men. The subject of the paper is made known to the members two weeks in advance. When the presenter is finished, there is opportunity for open debate and the expression of opinion in support of or against the presentation. The discussion is conducted in good taste and without prejudice, even when the presenter is one of the teachers or an officer of the society.... The members are humorously referred to as those who “do and dine,” that is, who bring pleasure to others and to themselves as well, for they offer new material
and also listen to the new ideas that are presented by others.

On the other hand, there are those who "dine but do not do," that is, who benefit from the innovations of others but do not contribute anything themselves. Because the society's purpose is to enhance Jewish knowledge it is our policy to welcome all who come, even if they are not members. The society was founded last year at the end of the winter and these are the subjects of the papers that were presented at the meetings: The Karaite Prayers (Dr. Adler); The Authorship and Time of the Second Psalm (Dr. Gottheil, the society chairman); The Biblical Cantillation (Dr. Mielziner, formerly of our staff and now in Cincinnati, as indicated above); The Calculation of the New Months and the Seasons (the scholar Sekles); Moses Hayyim Luzzatto and his la-Yesharim Tehillah (the scholar Schnabel who is on our staff); The Ramban (Dr. Isaacs); Rabbinic Hebrew and Its Development (four lectures by the writer); The Song at the Red Sea (Nathan Biyur); The Poetry of Ha'azinu (Adam Rosenberg); The Book of Kohelet—The Author and His Time. Was It Written Originally in Hebrew or Is It a Translation? (Three papers on this subject by Dov Drachman, P. Hecht, who was then a student but is now in Cincinnati, and Raphael Jacob Gottheil); The Jews as Bearers of Emancipation (Abraham Illich). The papers were presented either in English or German.

The society's members meet in the library of Temple Emanu-El, which has made its collection available to us. We are permitted to borrow books when necessary. I am also a member of the society, which has appointed me to be in charge of the books and their circulation. I have also prepared a catalog and among the books I discovered some manuscripts of Jacob Emden, some of which had been known to me only by name and some which were entirely unknown. I shall speak to the Yehudit society about this find next month. I now bring you tidings and express my regret that I was not part of Hamagid, which formerly would bring such tidings to the Jewish world.

A.B.E.

New York, Shevat 5640 (1880)

*Jacob Kabakoff is Professor Emeritus of Hebrew Studies, Lehman College of the City University of New York. He has written extensively on American Hebraica.*
Recent Acquisitions of
the American Jewish Archives, 1996–1997

The archival holdings of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the
American Jewish Archives presently total approximately 9,000 linear
feet of material. The vast majority of the collection consists of more
than 620 collections of personal papers and organizational records —
each ranging in size from 1 box (.4 linear feet) to more than 1,000
boxes. The collection also contains more than 14,000 individually cata-
loged small collections (holdings consisting of one or more pages
stored in a legal-sized file folder). The American Jewish Archives also
possesses an extensive nonprint collection: 4,000 audiotapes, 3,000
microfilms, 500 videotapes, as well as a photograph collection con-
taining approximately 20,000 images.

This collection is constantly growing. In 1996 and 1997 the Marcus
Center accessioned more than 400 new holdings. Beginning with this
issue — and continuing in every fall/winter issue of The American
Jewish Archives Journal — this space will provide a regular listing and
brief analysis of some of the most important elements of our newly
cataloged and opened collections. Our goal is to provide our readers
and patrons with a partial inventory of our recent acquisitions together
with an explanation as to why these materials are important. It is our
hope that by showing our users how our archival collection is grow-
ing and developing we will simultaneously encourage increased inter-
est in and the use of the remarkable collection housed at the American
Jewish Archives.

Questions pertaining to the new acquisitions listed below — or
any of the archival holdings in the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the
American Jewish Archives — should be addressed to:

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PERSONAL PAPERS

The Marcus Center has a rich and diverse collection of personal papers ranging from the early eighteenth century to the present. These collections cover the gamut of religious, professional, personal, and communal Jewish life in the United States. This year’s new acquisitions are particularly interesting, containing the papers of such noteworthy persons as Marie Syrkin, Benno Landsberger, Marc Tanenbaum, and Samuel H. Dresner.

The Marcus Center also has a large collection of personal papers centering on the American Reform rabbinate. This year’s additions to this collection include materials and papers concerning Rabbi Alan M. Sokobin, Rabbi Paul M. Steinberg, Rabbi Alfred Gottschalk, and Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern, who not only was a preeminent leader in the Reform movement but was also the world’s foremost authority on American Jewish genealogy.

Aaron Family. Papers. 1880–1990. 2.4 linear feet.
Consists of the papers of Marcus Lester Aaron (1900–1994), his father, Marcus Lester Aaron (1869–1954), and his grandfather, Louis I. Aaron (1840–1919). Collection includes correspondence, addresses, and other materials reflecting their activities in several Jewish organizations, including the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods, World Union for Progressive Judaism, and National Farm School.
Received from Frances Hess, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1996.

Includes correspondence with colleagues, primarily about Ms. Cohon’s editing of the musical manuscripts and scores of Abraham Idelsohn.
Received from Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, Los Angeles, California, 1993.

Correspondence with various persons, including Robert Gordis and Felix A. Levy.
Received from Elliot B. Gertel, Chicago, Illinois, 1996.

Tribute to Dr. Gottschalk given at the sixty–third biennial convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Atlanta, Georgia, November 30, 1995.
Received from Alfred Gottschalk, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1995.

Recent Acquisitions

Unpublished autobiography of Janowsky's life and work, including his childhood in Poland and career as a professor and author.
Received from Sylvia Moskowitz, Lake Worth, Florida, 1997.

Diary of a trip from New York City to Vincennes, Indiana, and back. October–December 1827.
Received from Zan E. Van Antwerp, New York City, 1997.

Correspondence with various persons. In English, French, and German.
Received from Samuel Greengus, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1996.

Miscellaneous correspondence and papers.
Received from Alan M. Sokobin, Sylvania, Ohio, 1996.

Steinberg, Paul M. Academic convocation tribute. 1997. 1 videocassette.
Videorecording of a special academic convocation given by Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion honoring Dr. Steinberg. New York City, September 18, 1997.
Received from Paul M. Steinberg, New York City, 1997.

Includes writings, correspondence, and papers pertaining to Rabbi Stern's genealogical research and writing, information on rabbinical associations and activities, and memorials and tributes to Stern. The genealogy series includes materials on Jewish families and communities throughout the United States and dates to the seventeenth century.
Received from Louise Stern, New York City, 1996.

Consists of correspondence, poetry, published and unpublished articles, addresses, translations, class lecture notes, materials pertaining to Syrkin's work as a representative for Hillel seeking scholarship recipients in Displaced Persons camps following World War II, and miscellaneous items. Important correspondents include Nachman Syrkin, David Ben–Gurion, Golda Meir, and Irving Howe.
Received from David Brodansky, Seattle, Washington, 1993.

Papers describing Tanenbaum's career as rabbi, author, and activist in interfaith relations. The collection includes newsclippings, periodicals, pamphlets, correspondence, reports, press releases, notes, conference materials, lectures, manuscripts, photographs, filmscripts, orga-
nizational records, and personal items.

Received from Georgette Bennett, New York City, 1992.

**ORGANIZATIONAL RECORDS**

Of particular interest in this year’s acquisitions of organizational records are the papers of the Cincinnati, Ohio, United Jewish Cemetery; audiotapes of conference sessions at the 104th annual meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis; the records of Temple Israel of Dayton, Ohio; and records pertaining to the Los Angeles Community Relations Committee’s efforts at monitoring Nazi activities in southern California during the 1930s.

**Beth Israel Cemetery/Ohel Jacob Cemetery (Meridian, Mississippi).** Records. 1996. 21 pp.

Burial index for Beth Israel Cemetery and Ohel Jacob Cemetery, Meridian, Mississippi, compiled by Julian H. Preisler.

Received from Julian H. Preisler, Wilmington, Delaware, 1996.

**Central Conference of American Rabbis.** Conference proceedings. 1993. 54 audiocassettes.

Recordings of conference sessions held at the 104th annual meeting of the CCAR. Montreal, Quebec, Canada, June 20–24, 1993.

Received from the Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York City, 1997.

**Community Relations Committee (Los Angeles, California).** Reports. 1938–1941. 1 linear foot.

Two reports and three supplements describing Nazi activities in southern California from 1936 to 1941. Taken from a larger collection of records housed at the Urban Archives Center in the Oviatt Library at the California State University, Northridge, California.

Received from the Urban Archives Center at the California State University, Northridge, California.

**First International Conference of Judaica and Israeli Librarians.** Conference proceedings. 1990. 69 audiocassettes.


Received from Edith Lubetski, New York City, 1996.


Correspondence and proposals concerning the establishment of the HUC–JIR’s School of Sacred Music.

Received from Paul M. Steinberg, New York City, 1996.
   Minutes of the Fresno chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women.
   Received from Temple Beth Israel, Fresno, California, 1996.

   Newspapers; constitution, 1910; and minute book, 1910–1946.
   Received from Selig Salkowitz, Stockton, California, 1993.

   Collection consists of general files documenting various temple activities such as committee work, membership activities, special events, community outreach, and educational endeavors. Also contains files relating to Rabbi Selwyn Ruslander's activities with the Jewish chaplaincy during the Vietnam War.
   Received from Temple Israel, Dayton, Ohio, 1995.

   Collection consists of correspondence, 1904–1911; cemetery deeds, 1862–1946; interment list, 1850–1930; and minutes, 1862–1949.
   Received from the United Jewish Cemetery, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1996.

   Papers and documents concerning the establishment of the Robert Krohn Livingston Memorial Camp.
   Received from Marcia Goldsmith, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1996.

ORAL HISTORIES

The oral histories listed here include collections compiled on a specific topic or community as well as interviews with various individuals.


Oral histories of Chicago-area Jews, conducted by Gertel. Also includes interviews with members of the New Haven, Connecticut, and Springfield, Massachusetts, Jewish communities.

Restricted for thirty years. Must receive permission of Elliot B. Gertel.
Received from Elliot B. Gertel, Chicago, Illinois, 1997.

Summary of oral history interviews conducted by Goodwin with members of Temple Beth-El of Providence, Rhode Island.
Restricted. Permission to publish quotations from the interviews must be obtained from the interviewees and George M. Goodwin.

Received from George M. Goodwin, Providence, Rhode Island, 1997.

**Gottschalk, Alfred.** Oral history interview. 1997. 1 audiocassette.

Received from Mark Kaiserman, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1997.

**Weinberg, Werner.** Oral history interview. 1996. 1 audiocassette.
Interview with Weinberg concerning his experiences during the Holocaust; conducted by Ann Mann Millin in association with the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation.

Received from Gail Mermelstein, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1997.

**HISTORIES AND BIOGRAPHIES**

Included in this section are theses, biographies, term papers, documentaries, and recollections, together with regional and community histories.

**Cohen, Edward.** Documentary. 1995. 1 videocassette.
*The Natchez Jewish Experience*, a documentary and history of the Natchez, Mississippi, Jewish community, produced and directed by Cohen. 1995.

Received from Abraham J. Peck, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1996.


Received from Judah M. Cohen, Maplewood, New Jersey, 1996.

*In Search of Ben Yishai*, a brief biography documenting the life of
the Yiddish poet, David Greenberg.  
Received from Alvin Greenberg, Saint Paul, Minnesota, 1996.

**Marcus, Jacob Rader.** Recollections. 1996. 150 pp.  
*Maunderings about a Centenarian: An Internal Correspondence to Remember the Dean of the American Jewish Experience.* A collection of recollections about Dr. Marcus written by his students and friends.  
Received from Abraham J. Peck, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1996.

**Montana.** Documentary. 1996. 1 videocassette.  
Received from Montana Public Television, Bozeman, Montana, 1996.

Received from Jay H. Moses, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1997.

Received from the Estate of Jacob Rader Marcus, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1995.

Letter to Rabbi Marvin Simkovich containing information on Congregation Shaarei Tefillah and the Newton (Massachusetts) Jewish community.  
Received from Jonathan D. Sarna, Waltham, Massachusetts, 1996.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter–Day Saints.** Holocaust survivor list. 1997. 1 compact disc.  
*Victims of the Holocaust,* a compact disc containing a database of names and vital information on nearly 250,000 victims of the Holocaust. Compiled and produced by the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter–Day Saints.  
Received from Robert Wise, President, Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies, Palo Alto, California, 1997.
Collection of newsclippings and other materials pertaining to claims of black anti-Semitism at Kent State University. Focuses on the publication of articles in the student newspaper linking Jews to the American slave trade. Collection compiled by Lewis Fried, professor of American literature at Kent State University.
Received from Lewis Fried, Kent, Ohio, 1997.

Cansino Family History, a family history and genealogy prepared by Lewis I. Held, Jr., and Jack Cansino.
Received from Lewis I. Held, Jr., Lubbock, Texas, 1996.
GOING BEYOND MEMORY: A Conference on Synagogue Archiving

Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus, the founder and first director of the American Jewish Archives, once wrote that the synagogue is "the basic institution of American Jewry." Dr. Marcus was devoted to this premise, so much so that he wrote in his founding statement outlining the program of the American Jewish Archives that the AJA would "concentrate on the acquisition and study" of synagogue records.

As a continuation of our more than fifty years of commitment to Dr. Marcus's vision for the documentation and study of the American synagogue, the Jacob Rader Marcus Center is proud to announce its first ever Synagogue Archivist's Conference, which will be held in Cincinnati at the Marcus Center on August 29-30, 1999.

This conference will bring together synagogue archivists and librarians from across the country. For two days, committed professionals and volunteers will meet with the staff of the Marcus Center to discuss problems and challenges associated with creating and maintaining synagogue archives. Topics covered will include: issues and concerns relative to collection development; appraisal of archival records; information storage and retrieval; bibliographic control of archival holdings; creation of finding aids; access policies and reference services; storage facilities and supplies; preservation and conservation; electronic information technology; and public relations.

All persons involved or interested in the workings of synagogue archives are invited to attend. Further information concerning the conference and how to register can be obtained by contacting:

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This is a compelling and readable account of the eventful fifty years before the independence of modern Israel, focusing on the American Zionist experience. For a dispersed and powerless minority, they were decisive decades of struggle for physical and cultural survival. Two world wars, the scourge of totalitarianism, conflicting ideologies, assimilation, and (ultimately) the Holocaust produced unparalleled crises.

That an array of distinguished American men and women relatively secure in the New World chose to grapple with the exotic challenges of international Zionism, is itself a kind of historic curiosity, all the more so in our supposedly "post-Zionist" era. In Theodor Herzl’s lifetime, when Jews fled the poverty and pogroms of Eastern Europe, they had not flocked to Palestine but voted with their feet for America, by the millions. The choice was understandable, under the circumstances, but thus the Jewish demographic balance was shifted, setting also a major new stage for the drama of continuity.

By what standards would this newly augmented community be judged? Some have noted its "contributions" even over one or two generations, in labor unions or agrarian utopias, in fifty years or so of transplanted Yiddish, in progressive movements, the literature of alienation, and the struggle for justice.

Rafael Medoff's story of American Jewish Zionists brings us their human voices through a unique prism but in a past that is not unrelated to the community at large. We learn much about their ideals, their organizational and personal politics, their sense of identity as Jews and Americans. Still, the absorbed reader is left with the inevitable, haunting questions that no historian can answer: what if... did they try hard enough...couldn’t they unite? And wasn’t Nazi evil far more "decisive" than Rabbi Stephen Wise and his well-intentioned colleagues could ever be?

Beyond communal politics, this seems also a primer on leadership of the era, if not always detailed specifically. They were, of course, not popularly elected; they were volunteers, generally idealistic, well educated yet a bit self-deprecating (including their Jewish identity), heirs of prophetic universalism and ethics, problem solvers dependent on
powers of persuasion with friend or foe, optimistic, forgiving of one’s real or potential enemies (such as Palestinian Arabs even in the bloody “riots” of 1920, 1921, 1929, and 1936–39). Affluence and social status were joined with self-assurance or ambition as also occasionally negative traits such as being ill-informed, gullible, complacent, secretive, awed by the mighty (politicians), and dependent on biased sources. A meticulous historian, Medoff offers relevant information in text and references (even the chapter endnotes contain well-written and useful comments) with little prejudice. And need one say that perhaps leadership characteristics don’t change much over time?

But if the Zionist elite was prone to personal, ideological, or tactical differences, they were generally united by a shared belief in American values such as democracy and pragmatism, as well as their concern for the Jewish people. They sought to reconcile whatever conflicts might emerge between their identities as Jews and as Americans (often, it seemed, more influenced by the latter), mainly out of personal conviction as well as their concern for public opinion. The criticisms of non-Jewish leaders such as Harry Emerson Fosdick were painfully featured in the New York Times.

Yet, what kind of Palestine did they envision as the future “Jewish state”? Herein is Medoff’s major theme, so much in the context of the Progressive, melting-pot era: “As Americans they wanted Palestine to resemble America” (24). After all, one might add, rapid Americanization was seen as the duty of those newly arrived masses aided by their acculturated brethren in the United States. Such blessed values were to be exported also even throughout the world, as in the War to Make the World Safe for Democracy. (Medoff does not, however, neglect the interwar rumblings in the Yiddish press.)

The pragmatism and social justice shibboleths were evident in one meeting of Zionist leaders with Nathan Straus to hear a report from Palestine (1919). Harry Friedenwald, recent head of the Federation of American Zionists, returned from a six-month mission to proclaim that good relations with the Arabs were feasible, based on proposed financial aid leading to mutual friendship. Both Jews and Arabs were bound to benefit. Moreover, “we shall [thus] lessen the danger of letting part of our own people sink to the primitive levels of the natives. Noblesse Oblige,” he concluded (28). Sadly, this generous formulation of economic prosperity was to be contrasted with the “horrifying” anti-Jewish Arab violence of the following spring.

Was it not reasonable for these Americans to assume that an
undeveloped Arab nationalism had been more then amply rewarded with six new sovereignties and vast land areas? That the Arabs in Palestine were often recent arrivals, scarcely different from kin in neighboring countries, and thus would volunteer for lucrative offers of resettlement in (for example) Iraq where far more fertile land was available? And after the British severed from Palestine about 78 percent of its land to create a new Arab kingdom of Transjordan (1921), that U.S. Zionists would see the latter also as a promising area for subsidized resettlement?

Foremost, however, the British action violated their belief in law and international agreements (San Remo). That Jews were now prohibited from almost four-fifths of Palestine represented a betrayal of the Balfour Declaration's promise of a "national home for the Jewish people" there, as well as American notions of equal access. Nor could they fathom the British High Commissioner's pardon of the Grand Mufti, a leader of the "riots" that appeared more motivated by religious and ethnic hatred than nationalist or economic competition. Neither the Arabs nor the British seemed to fit the consistently progressive conceptions of the Zionist leadership.

Was American Zionism a captive of its own hopeful illusions, throughout a less than triumphant history? Medoff's conscientious research and thematic narrative prod the reader to draw conclusions from the fascinating web of ideas and personalities (Brandeis to Abba Hillel Silver). "American Jews," we are reminded, always confronted with the challenge of "Zionism vs. Americanism...shaped their Zionism to fit a distinctly American mold"(58).

American Zionists especially feared alienating liberal public opinion on such elusive issues as self-determination and equal opportunity for Palestinian Arabs. An exasperated Chaim Weizmann once complained (1929) that "ignorance" might cause American liberals to reject Zionism for pan-Arabism: "Jews in America are getting cold feet...I always knew that one is more frightened in New York than in Jerusalem"(58). And even after the Holocaust, the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism testified before the United Nations against a Jewish state, albeit in part of Palestine, as a threat to "Americans of Jewish faith"(48).

Medoff recognizes, of course, the diversity of views even within the midstream Zionist camp, as well as the interested input of other leaders (some who participated in the Jewish Agency or organizations such as American Jewish Congress). He traces varied attitudes toward
Arabs from an early romanticized view as dashing tribesmen or biblical kin, to repeated efforts at understanding (sometimes rationalizing) anti-Zionist hostility.

At times, a kind of benevolent wishful thinking took hold, denying Arab massacres as just “a passing phase” (34). After 27 Jews were murdered in Jaffa (1921), Henrietta Szold pressed for expansion of Hadassah’s medical services to Arabs, blaming the violence of a few on lack of economic opportunity. In the wake of the 1929 “riots” (133 Jews dead, 339 wounded, and the destruction of Hebron’s Jewish community), then the more extensive losses of 1936-39, Louis D. Brandeis still hoped that only those “politically minded or unthinking Arabs would fail to remember that their illness had been healed by Jewish generosity” (84). Both Szold and Brandeis were, deservedly, icons of American Jewish leadership and idealism.

With hindsight, the “dilemmas” woven so skillfully by Medoff seemed insoluble by idealistic or pragmatic means in the face of daunting realities such as Arab enmity and demographic preponderance. Could Wilsonian self-determination be resolved by the Zionist promise of “delayed democracy” or some other constitutional device? Regarding the demographic problem, Medoff stresses the recurrent appeal of subsidized Arab resettlement (transfer) among the mainstream leadership (not just among extremists) that appeared in New Palestine (1930), a publication of the Zionist Organization of America, Brandeis’s correspondence with President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1939), or the 1940s efforts to work with a sympathetic former President Herbert Hoover on humanitarian grounds and in the “free World’s interests” (123).

Ultimately, the Holocaust and the struggle for a free Israel would strengthen and unify the Zionist camp, even in the face of persistent “dilemmas,” including the Arab world’s hostility, British machinations, and private as well as governmental United States ambivalence. But if lessons can be learned from history, this book should prove informative not only for scholars of Israel and America but all those concerned with present and future crises affecting the Jewish state.

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Few figures in American Jewish history have been accorded the star status of Henrietta Szold. As the "mother" of American Zionism, the founder of Hadassah, and the force behind Youth Aliyah, Szold has earned a place approaching sainthood in the historical imagination of American Jews. But because Szold has been treated as an icon, she has frequently been cast in simplistic terms: the tireless practical worker, the traditional "woman of valor," the savior of Palestine's sick and orphaned. As a result, few works detailing her life have come to terms with her full complexity, examining how she was at once a practical worker and an intellectual, a feminist and a believer in special roles for women, an American patriot and a fervent Jewish nationalist.

In Lost Love: The Untold Story of Henrietta Szold, Baila Round Shargel leaves behind the conventional image of Szold to reveal her as a person who struggled with conflicting impulses concerning her role as a woman and a Jew. Bringing together a treasure trove of primary sources with an insightful introduction and conclusion, Shargel focuses on the "exceptional friendship" between Szold and Professor Louis Ginzberg, a brilliant Talmudist thirteen years her junior. Between 1903 and 1908, Szold and Ginzberg shared an intimate relationship that many observers—including Szold herself—assumed was a prelude to marriage. Szold's deep passion for Ginzberg, and the process of grieving and self-contemplation that she began when he married another woman, provide the context for Shargel's portrait of her complex yet resilient personality.

Szold was born in 1860 in Baltimore, where her father, Benjamin Szold, was rabbi of the Oheb Shalom congregation and one of the leaders of the "Historical School" of American Judaism. A moderate reformer who was wary of the assimilative tendencies of American Jews, Rabbi Szold raised the eldest of his eight daughters with a deep appreciation for Jewish culture and gave her the scholarly training usually reserved for a son. By the age of twenty she regularly contributed her own essays to weekly Jewish magazines, and in 1893 she was appointed executive secretary of the Jewish Publication Society of America, the country's most important organization dedicated to dissemination of Jewish literature. She also was one of the first American Jews to advocate a program of cultural Zionism in which Jewish education and spiritual revival would be fostered through the rebirth of a
Jewish homeland.

In 1903, Szold moved to New York to become the first female student at the newly reorganized Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTSA). There she met Ginzberg, who belonged to the impressive coterie of foreign-born scholars assembled by seminary president Solomon Schechter to teach at the institution. The two were brought together not only as teacher and student but also through the Jewish Publication Society, where Szold edited and translated much of Ginzberg's magnum opus, *Legends of the Jews*. Common scholarly interests quickly blossomed into a close personal relationship, nurtured during long walks in Morningside Park and hours spent at the dinner table in the home Szold shared with her mother. In the summer months, when Ginzberg was away on lengthy visits to Europe, the friendship was carried on through a voluminous correspondence in which the two shared news of their families, intellectual concerns, impressions of Jewish life, news of communal politics, and quips about leading Jewish personalities. Szold was exhilarated by the relationship, which gave her an opportunity to express feelings and emotions she felt she had forfeited during her career as a writer, editor, and communal worker in the world of men. At the same time, however, she found it increasingly difficult to assert her intellectual independence as she grew closer to the object of her affection. Ginzberg advised her against speaking in public, and her literary output almost ceased as she poured her talents and energies into translating, editing, and commenting upon his work.

The many letters exchanged between Szold and Ginzberg during their six-year relationship form roughly half the text of *Lost Love*. Although Szold's manuscripts were lovingly preserved by her family, they were distributed among several archival institutions in the United States and Israel. Like an archaeologist, Shargel has reassembled the letters from these scattered collections and matched them with those preserved in Ginzberg's papers at JTSA. These materials not only trace the development of the Szold-Ginzberg relationship from their first contact to their torturous parting but also provide a marvelous record of the Jewish world at the time, brimming with commentary on its events and personalities.

To complement the correspondence, Shargel also presents a journal Szold kept in the months following the breakup of the relationship, after Ginzberg returned home from Europe engaged to the young Berliner, Adele Katzenstein. Written during a period of shock
and self-evaluation, the journal, which Shargel calls a "Meditation on Lost Love," recounts the relationship through Szold's eyes, critically assessing her own passive behavior and Ginzberg's treatment of her. Unlike the letters, the diary reveals Szold's internal struggle to understand the failure of her romantic ambitions and to come to terms with the conflicting pressures she faced as a woman of accomplishment and a woman in love. The journal, which reflects the depth of both Szold's intellectual and her emotional capacity, has been restricted from public use by her family since her death in 1945. Luckily, Shargel gained permission not only to examine its contents but to publish them in full. She has carried out this task with an innovative editing style in which she punctuates the journal text with the Szold-Ginzberg correspondence, juxtaposing diary entries in which Szold reveals her innermost passions with polite letters signed "Yours Truly, Henrietta Szold." By weaving together the two sources, one an artifact of the relationship and the other a reflection on it, Shargel is able to recreate not only the dialogue between Szold and Ginzberg but the one between Szold's inner thoughts and her public expressions.

Shargel presents the primary sources in an innovative, interactive way and adds a helpful interpretive voice as well. Having previously written a biography of Israel Friedlaender, a colleague of Ginzberg at the seminary and a friend and coworker of Szold in the Zionist movement, she comes to this material with a detailed knowledge of the context in which it was produced. In her introduction, Shargel acquaints the reader with the relationship between Szold and Ginzberg by discussing how it was shaped by their backgrounds, the milieu of the seminary, and by Szold's unique position as a woman who defied conventional boundaries. Shargel also draws on psychological theory to situate Szold's experience, both as a self-denying devotee of Ginzberg during the relationship and as a survivor trying to make sense of her loss in the months following its collapse.

A perceptive epilogue pinpoints the larger significance of Szold's relationship with Ginzberg, explaining how the personal reassessment that came in its wake gave Szold renewed confidence in her own abilities, sparked an impatience with communal leaders who expected her to be passive, and marked a new refusal to be confined by strict gender roles in her undertakings. But while Shargel sees the relationship as a turning point for Szold, she takes issue with historians who
have suggested that Szold’s increasing Zionist activity—including the founding of Hadassah in 1912—developed only as a salve for her wounded heart. Rather than propel her in a totally new direction, explains Shargel, the break with Ginzberg simply gave her the confidence to translate her long-held convictions into a plan of action. “Summoning inner resources after the Ginzberg debacle,” she writes, “Szold learned to rely on her own instincts and live a life that reflected her own values: Zionist, cultural, practical, religious, and feminist” (334).

By bringing together sources that capture both the public and the private Szold, Shargel has focused new light on the complexity of Szold’s life. Her account of Szold’s tumultuous struggle for love and personal fulfillment substitutes depth and humanity for the superficial image of the Zionist matron that has so often graced Jewish magazine covers. Though they may see Szold in a different light, readers of Shargel’s work will find new reasons to admire a woman who found it difficult to fit into the worlds in which she lived but never desisted from challenging their boundaries.

Eric L. Goldstein was a Rabbi Theodore S. Levy Tribute Fellow at the American Jewish Archives in 1996.
Too often, Classical Reform Judaism is presented as if it were monolithic and uniform. Bobbie Malone has written a biography in which she shatters the stereotype so often associated with Reform rabbis of the Pittsburgh Platform era. Her subject, Rabbi Max Heller (1860–1929), provides a fascinating case study.

In ten chapters, Malone explores the life and times of this turn-of-the-century rabbi. The opening chapter, "From Prague to Chicago," chronicles young Max’s Bohemian Jewish upbringing in Prague. His childhood years are a window into the life of one who had "one foot in the world of Hebraic scholarship and the other in that of German culture."

Upon Max’s enrollment as a rabbinical student at the Hebrew Union College, Isaac Mayer Wise, the architect of American Judaism, would become Heller’s second father. Malone successfully conveys a sense of the excitement generated by Wise and disciples like Heller in forging a modern Judaism responsive to the new American milieu. Throughout the book, one is overwhelmed by the personages with whom Heller studied and interacted. In addition to his relationship with I. M. Wise and Bernard Felsenthal of Chicago and his close friendship with Rabbi Henry Cohen of Galveston, Heller enjoyed contemporary conversations with a host of great thinkers, including W. E. B. Du Bois, Horace Kallen, Solomon Schechter, Louis Brandeis, and the younger Stephen S. Wise. As the pages unfold, one begins to appreciate the magnitude of the times in which Heller lived and led. Malone unwittingly presents Heller as our personal witness and link to the founders and framers of American Reform Judaism. We see Isaac Mayer Wise in the role of counselor and virtual godfather to Heller in helping Heller secure his position at New Orleans’s Temple Sinai, then the South’s largest congregation in the South’s largest city.

Heller’s successful leadership of his prosperous, acculturated, and proud Reform congregation only two years after the passage of the Pittsburgh Platform becomes more remarkable as we learn of his unpopular stands. In an age when Reform accentuated "religion" over "peoplehood" and America as the Jewish Zion, one can only imagine the deference and respect congregants accorded this trailblazing Reform Zionist and close friend of the Orthodox community. Heller skillfully managed the pulpit as a place for raising consciousness
about basic urban ills and public corruption without attacking individual congregants. He was savvy in forging close friendships with the Anglo-Protestant and Catholic clergy of New Orleans, as well as empathizing and respectfully disagreeing with his predecessor James Gutheim’s support of the Confederacy.

Heller was less forbearing with his Reform colleague Isaac Leucht of Touro Synagogue. Leucht’s paternalistic and, at times, insensitive response to Jewish charity cases enraged the immigrant Heller. In certain matters Heller refused to back down, as evident in his antilottery stand and in his willingness to publicly air his private differences with Rabbi Leucht over the disbursement of Jewish communal funds to the needy. Heller was, however, selective in speaking out on controversial issues. As Malone writes, “[Heller’s] need for social acceptance and his sense of community allegiance, at all levels, meant that radical risk-taking was not a political prerogative.” Balancing his passion for social justice with his desire for civic respectability would become an ongoing struggle for the leading rabbi of a city marked by “elite rule, privatism, and a Catholic majority.” Hence, Heller’s own plea for moral courage could only be articulated in a cautious way. This is not a criticism of Heller so much as a comment on his realistic recognition of the parameters of tolerable dissent.

The visionary side of Heller is best appreciated through his commentary on the strengths and limitations of Reform in meeting the emotional needs of the East European masses flocking to American shores. Within the Reform movement, Heller questioned the embrace of rationalism and discarding of virtually all ceremonials. He called for the reinstatement of some religious rituals in Reform. Malone also documents the uncommon connection between this rabbi of Americanized Jewish elites and the growing wave of impoverished, Orthodox, Yiddish-speaking immigrants. Heller’s sense of Jewish peoplehood in championing the rights of poor Russian Jews is uplifting to read, and his embrace of Zionism as the only hope for Jewish life in Eastern Europe was prophetic.

It is no exaggeration to say that Max Heller was the first great reconciler of Zionism and American Reform Judaism, harmonizing the universal ideals of Reform with the moral imperative of embracing a Jewish state in light of the past and present threat to Jewish survival. How astute Heller was to have foreseen that while America may have been Zion for some, it hadn’t become Zion for all, especially for Jews still in Europe and for many African Americans at home. As Malone
comments, "[Heller's] life experiences in the South and his observations of recent Western European Jewish history had forced him to qualify his trust in liberalism." Clearly, Heller's firsthand knowledge of racial discrimination in the South and the anti-immigrant sentiment sweeping America explains very well his adoption of Zionism as a necessary safety valve for the rescue of European Jewry. Notwithstanding Heller's communal stature and family entrenchment in New Orleans, it is a bit surprising that this passionate advocate of Zionism and black civil rights spent his entire career in a region filled with racial prejudice, anti-Semitism, and anti-Zionism.

Malone's insights into Heller's outspoken defense of Zionism and the Negro race are among the most trenchant in the book, and she is not far off in linking Heller's position and perspective in America to that of Theodor Herzl in Vienna. For Heller, Zionism was a means to Jewish unity, survival, and the "rebirth of Hebrew as a living language." He also saw it as a way to combat assimilation. All this from a late-nineteenth-and early-twentieth-century Reform rabbi!

Ensconced in a heavily German-Jewish Reform city, this Reform rabbi had zero tolerance for the denigration of Orthodoxy. Instead, Heller espoused a Judaism of positive affirmation and interdenominational respect. He matched his words with meaningful gestures, such as "sitting modestly in the rear of the [Orthodox] shul with less prominent congregants...and visiting with Orthodox Zionist families on Shabbat afternoons." The mutuality of respect between Rabbi Heller and the New Orleans Orthodox community was most evident in the gift given by the city's major Orthodox congregation, Beth Israel, to Max and his wife Ida on the occasion of their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. That silver basket filled with white roses seemed to mean more to Heller than the presents showered upon him by his own congregants. He would later suggest that this gift may have been "the first time an orthodox congregation gave official recognition to the family festival of a Reform rabbi."

Malone stresses Heller's primary loyalty to his congregation and community, though there is little information on his personal relationship with congregants and allies within the temple he led. The force of his personality, writing, and eloquence surely helps account for Heller's forty-year tenure in the same pulpit. Nonetheless, one is still struck by the loneliness this isolated rabbi must have experienced in advocating positions so unpopular with his own congregants and community.
Malone mentions that he rarely invoked God in his sermons, leaving little if any discussion of Heller’s theology. This is a sad omission, especially for a life story of a rabbi and Zionist thinker. Was the significance of the Zionist movement solely a matter of saving Jews, or was there an additional theological meaning to it? We will never know given the data available to Malone.

As with every biography, it is a judgment call as to whether certain information belongs in the notes section instead of the main text and, undoubtedly, readers will vary in their opinion of what constitutes the trivial. That being said, the illustrations, appendices, and endnotes are thorough, clear, and useful.

Despite the passage of nearly a century, many issues facing Heller’s world still confront us today: the revival of ritual observance in Reform, the definition and qualities of the relationship between Zionism and Reform Judaism, the challenge of intermarriage, church-state separation, racism, lotteries, even child labor. Heller’s optimism in spite of these challenges and his own ill health is extraordinary. “Although Heller could not ignore the dimensions of the dangers he envisioned,” writes Malone, “he truly believed that moral courage and the spiritual vision of a reunited Jewish people would ultimately triumph.”

The chapters are laced with interesting tidbits, including inspiring letters to his sons and Heller’s honest sharing of disappointment following his unsuccessful attempt to become rabbi of Temple Emanuel in New York City late in his career.

I highly recommend this book for any student of southern Jewish history, Zionism and Reform Judaism, and/or the American rabbinate. We learn from this biography, as we glean from Professor Michael Meyer’s writings elsewhere, that debate and dialectic argument have always been part of the history of the Reform movement. Through Heller’s example, we discover that the viewpoints of leading rabbis from the era known as Classical Reform are much broader and more diverse than commonly assumed. The book is well written, and we can only look forward to future publications by Bobbie Malone.

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Louis Dembitz Brandeis is best known as Justice Brandeis, a member of the United States Supreme Court from 1916 to 1939. If pushed, many may remember him as a courageous attorney known as the "people's attorney" who took cases at no charge to protect the rights of working people. Some may also recall his eminent position as the leader of the American Zionist community during the formative years that eventually led to the creation of the state of Israel.

However, most of us were never exposed to his political or economic philosophy. Brandeis Beyond Progressivism by Philippa Strum makes an important contribution by adopting the position that Brandeis should be taken seriously as a political commentator, historian, and economic theorist. Moreover, Strum successfully argues that Brandeis's ideas about the federal government, the judicial system, and democracy are as relevant today as they were articulated by Brandeis in the early and middle parts of this century.

Brandeis Beyond Progressivism helps us understand Brandeis's apprehension of big government and big business. While Brandeis assisted in the drafting of several New Deal legislative programs, he felt that a powerful centralized authority was only necessary for a major emergency and exclusively on a very temporary basis. In general, he felt that big government and business were a curse that allowed for laziness and were therefore insufficient. Furthermore, and perhaps of more importance to Brandeis, there was the fear that any organization with too much power would become corrupted by excess power and ultimately would undermine or pervert the will of the people. He wanted all institutions to remain "human size" so that individuals would not lose control and so that institutions would remain aware and responsive to the needs of the workers. He wanted business to be small enough so the owners would be in sufficient contact with the workers to remember their humanity and their human needs. He feared large corporations that inevitably lack compassion and do not care about the individual employee.

As we debate the need for continued antitrust legislation, protection of workers' rights, minimum wage, and health care, Brandeis's philosophy challenges our thinking. He stood up for the worker and the need to view workers as a major "natural resource." He advocated for the protection of small business, assistance to consumers, and
fair treatment of workers. And while his political beliefs are certainly not revolutionary, his philosophical perspective is as refreshing as it is timeless.

Democracy was Brandeis's religion, according to Strum. He strongly believed in the American experiment and believed that its success or failure ultimately depended on an involved citizenry. For Brandeis, it was critical that workers had sufficient leisure time to become informed and interested. He truly feared the growing demands on workers by big business such that they would become automatons and unable to fully participate in the democratic process. Moreover, he felt that each person had to fully partake in the political process to develop their full potential and for democracy to effectively function. Failure of providing time and encouragement for workers' involvement would ultimately undermine the democratic system. Accordingly, Brandeis felt that an economic system that did not permit adequate protection of workers' wages, health, and leisure doomed both the individual's self-fulfillment and democracy.

This belief in the need for the protection of workers as a necessity for the preservation of society was one of Brandeis's major reasons for taking cases and advocating positions aimed at protecting workers' rights. The support of unions became a natural extension of this philosophy, as he felt that only strong unions could protect workers from the powerful and power-hungry corporations. Ideally, he believed that neither employers nor employees ought to dominate the relationship. Rather, he envisioned a time when companies would be governed by teams made up of both managers and employees. While this vision of joint management has not become the norm, it certainly has received greater respect and many more adherents over time.

Strum clearly and forcefully presents Brandeis's political philosophy of the need to protect the worker as critical to the future of the United States as a democracy; the book also uplifts our vision on the reason for honoring the individual. Brandeis's thinking always emphasized that individual uniqueness was a blessing and not a curse for society. Diversity was a strength that would build the character of this country. Each race and people had a duty to develop its own character, and such development would enable a higher civilization to be attained. Supporting this vision of building a nation based on democracy was an underlying theme of the creation of a just society. For Brandeis, just society meant equality for everyone before the law, regu-
larity of employment, reasonable income, reasonable working hours, opportunity for self-realization, free access to quality education, and proper medical care. He wanted all groups, all religions, all nationalities to view themselves as being chosen people who had a special mission. And he wanted all to feel it was their civic duty to actively participate in the political process.

Brandeis was passionate in his protection of free speech as necessary to encourage people with different viewpoints to participate in the democratic process. It was necessary for people to hear and understand other people’s points of view if they and our nation were to grow. Moreover, he was also passionate in his view that the judiciary must generally not stand in the way of legislative enactments. For Brandeis, the great American experiment required attempting unique solutions. However, he felt that this was primarily the role of the states rather than the federal government. Like his belief about big business, he feared a strong central government. He truly believed that it was the role of the states to engage in creating new legislative approaches that could be adopted by the federal government only after a long period of testing.

Beyond providing us a fuller picture of Brandeis’s political and economic beliefs, Strum presents Brandeis’s view about lawyers. Brandeis viewed the legal profession as being noble, with every lawyer having the character of a statesman. He was proud that so many of those who helped to guide and create the United States were from the legal profession. Brandeis taught that the lawyer needs to redeem himself by developing moral courage in the face of financial loss and personal will to stand for right and justice. He wanted lawyers to refrain from becoming specialists resulting in vast areas of ignorance. He wanted them to have a high moral character that would allow them the strength to refuse taking inappropriate cases. In Brandeis’s own life, he freely gave of his time to causes in which he believed, attempted to act out of a deep commitment to civic virtue, and turned away clients if he thought they were wrong.

Brandeis’s creativity in being the first lawyer to cite law review articles or to bring detailed scientific research into his famous “Brandeis Briefs” enabled him to become a part of the Zionist dream. In a very real way, he yearned for a society where every person had equal opportunity. He saw Palestine as a reborn Athens and a perfected America. His deep involvement in Zionism was more about
perfecting his dream of an economic and political democracy then creating a safe haven for Jews. Unlike his European colleague who felt that Jews had to immigrate to Palestine for their own protection, he felt that Jews could be safe and could prosper in America. His support for Zionism was a natural continuation of his belief in the need for experimentation in the democratic process and not so much out of a need to develop a safe haven for Jews.

Brandeis Beyond Progressivism is a well-crafted book that fills in many blanks about Brandeis as a historian, economist, and political commentator. In so doing, Strum demonstrates that important social leaders, such as Brandeis, never work in a vacuum but have definite and deeply felt philosophical beliefs that inform and guide their actions. In addition, Strum’s work teaches that Brandeis did not leave a vacuum, as many of our current ideas, judicial beliefs, and legislation that governs business are living testimony to his lasting legacy.

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Book Reviews


In the summer of 1991, the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, New York, witnessed a wave of anti–Jewish and antiblack violence and terror that had not been seen by Americans for decades. The aftermath of this incident included some 150 police officers and thirty-eight civilians injured. This and other recent conflicts between blacks and Jews sent many scholars into a feverish pitch to investigate both the past and the current relationship between African and Jewish Americans. What their findings revealed was that this latest episode of intolerance rested on long–standing issues such as affirmative action, racial quotas, Jesse Jackson, and Louis Farrakhan.

Murray Friedman’s *What Went Wrong*? seeks to explore the historical and present interactions among black and Jewish Americans. The author addresses a variety of subjects such as the involvement of Jewish Americans in the Atlantic slave trade and in the development of slavery itself. Friedman also traces the presence of a black–Jewish alliance in the abolition movement, in the creation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and in the early stages of the civil rights movement.

While highlighting the long history of a coherent black–Jewish alliance, the author asserts that for almost a century blacks and Jews were allies in a comprehensive struggle for civil rights and racial equality in the United States. This relationship, although at times “marked by conflict and suspicion...[among] many blacks and Jews,” led to several landmark court decisions and helped to create the civil rights legislation of the 1960s (14). However, the appearance of black nationalists transformed the movement “into a race revolution” (218). This change, which was linked to the rise of the black consciousness movement of the late 1960s, led to the beginning stage of decades of distrust among the old civil rights coalition of blacks and Jews. Thus, today's relations between these two former allies are at an all-time low.

In the first chapter, Friedman refutes the false claim that Jewish Americans were involved disproportionately in the Atlantic slave trade. His next chapter examines the existence of a black–Jewish alliance in the creation of the NAACP in 1909. The author asserts that this alliance helped to make the NAACP one of the most important organizations “for racial progress for the next fifty years” (45).
The next three chapters explore the partnership between blacks and Jews in their struggle for civil rights and racial equality in the courts, in the arts, and in the social sciences. This coalition, however, was not without some internal conflicts. In the 1930s, for example, "black-Jewish antagonisms flared into the open" (89). But the 1940s ushered in a new period of relative calmness.

Friedman devotes chapters 9–15 to the civil rights movement. He notes that during this important period of social upheaval and political reform, the "black-Jewish alliance was a key element in bringing the civil rights revolution to...its highest point, the 1963 March on Washington" (195). But within a year, with the rise of black nationalists and the subsequent black power phase, the civil rights movement was changed "into a race revolution" (218). For the next several decades, the previous coalition between African and Jewish Americans was "fractured beyond [the] hope of repair" (256).

Friedman's book ends with three brief chapters on the conflicts between blacks and Jews surrounding such topics as affirmative action, racial quotas, the Andrew Young affair, Jesse Jackson, the Crown Heights incident, and the speeches of Louis Farrakhan. The author notes that the complex responses of many blacks and Jews to the Bakke case, the actions of former United Nations ambassador Andrew Young, and several insensitive comments made by Jesse Jackson in the late 1970s and early 1980s all led to the creation of Balkan–like camps on both sides. In addition, the controversial speeches of Louis Farrakhan in the 1990s, as well as the aftermath of the 1991 Crown Heights incident, exasperated the heated feelings of distrust among many black and Jewish Americans that had been beneath the surface for many decades. The author concludes that this hostile and sour atmosphere led many on both sides to claim that it was time "to chart their unique individual destinies" (356).

Friedman's What Went Wrong? is a carefully researched and lucidly written book. It contains both a comprehensive analysis of the black-Jewish alliance of the past and a commentary on the unraveling of this coalition today. The author should be commended on his quest to examine such an important but highly volatile subject. However, there are some problems.

One criticism is that Friedman seems to defend every Jewish position on the issue of civil rights and downplays any internal strife. One wonders if the rosy picture the author paints is truly accurate.
Another problem is that the author's passion for his subject sometimes leads him to make naive or overreaching statements. In chapter 1, for example, Friedman states that "There was never any doubt in my mind that the black-Jewish alliance stood at the center of the great American experiment in democracy" (15). Some "leftist" scholars, however, might argue that the traditional economic and social barriers of capitalism and class formation are more important to the central workings of American democracy than the so-called black-Jewish alliance.

The author's regular assault on scholars who dismiss the existence of a black-Jewish alliance or who claim that if one did exist, it has been romanticized too much by scholars, also is a problem. The author merely discards these arguments outright. More analysis is obviously needed in this area.

Another criticism is the author's repeated use of terms such as "historical revisionism" and "revisionism" to downplay or ignore most of the challenges to his arguments and claims on the past and present relationship among African and Jewish Americans. For example, the important interpretations of prominent African American scholars such as Clayborne Carson, Mary Frances Berry, John Blassingame, and Aldon Morris are classified as "historical revisionism" and regularly dismissed.

Finally, those readers looking for material on the contributions of women within the so-called black-Jewish alliance will be highly disappointed. Almost nothing is said on this subject.²

Despite these weaknesses, the author provides us with valuable insights into the past and current relationship between African and Jewish Americans. With astonishing skill and passion, Murray Friedman uncovers both the pain and the triumph of the close cooperation among blacks and Jews that has been shattered by the numerous conflicts of today. It is hoped that this detailed analysis will lead to the creation of a long-standing model to help other groups understand the need to create a truly multicultural society.

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NOTES

1. See Paul Berman, ed., Blacks and Jews: Alliances and Arguments (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1994); Michael Lemer and Cornell West,
American Jewish Archives Journal


When Judith Laikin Elkin's Jews of the Latin American Republics was published in 1980, it changed the way people understood the Jewish presence in the region. Her decision to center Jews within a broad Latin American ethnic and minority context was creative and her attempts to see Jewish multiple identities as part of a larger framework (for example in her comparison with Inca Garcilaso, a Peruvian of mixed Spanish and Inca heritage) spurred the study of Latin American Jewry, creating academic and public forums that have led to an explosion in research, both scholarly and popular, on the topic. With the publication of a paperback revised version, now titled The Jews of Latin America, students of Latin American and Jewish studies will have the opportunity to consider the ways in which the field of Latin American Jewish studies has changed over almost two decades.

The Jews of Latin America updates the work that Elkin did for the previous edition, based both on her own research and on new scholarship from various disciplines. Using a traditional narrative approach to history, Elkin provides a broad overview based on a schema that tends toward the macro comparative and ties Jewish communities together through an assumption of a singularity of Catholic notions about Jews. The organization is roughly chronological, and for those who know little of the subject matter the author provides a good sense of Latin American Jewish life. The focus is on the Ashkenazic experience, a replication of a historiography that tends to diminish the role of Sephardim in the region. This lacuna will, it is hoped, inspire a new generation of scholars to delve more deeply into this critical area, especially in the post–World War II era.

The broad nature of The Jews of Latin America is both its strength and its weakness. On the positive side Elkin has an impressive ability to draw upon a range of materials, in Spanish and English, helping to pull together an excellent set of secondary sources. For those with little knowledge, or only a basic interest, in the history of Jews in Latin America, the volume covers all the bases: from the Inquisition to the bombing of the AMIA, from historiographic debates to sociological studies. Elkin should be particularly applauded for rejecting the recent fashion of finding "secret Jews" throughout Latin America. She convincingly explains the scholarly problems of using Inquisition documents as "proof" of Jewish religion and quite rightly notes that we will
probably never know the actual numbers of crypto-Jews in either Iberia or Latin America (5–7).

Those who are specialists in Latin American studies may find some of Elkin’s broad comments problematic. Immigration policy is categorized as a question—"What type of immigrant should Latin America recruit?" (27)—giving the impression that the region was/is an organic actor rather than a set of specific countries, each with a particular interplay between individuals and masses or the state and society. There is rarely a sense of what the national histories mean for the region even though the book is organized by country (within thematic chapters). Indeed, one of the most important questions that Elkin poses—Is there such a thing as “Latin American Jewry”?—seems to receive an implicit positive answer even though a more explicit one would certainly engender important debate.

Throughout The Jews of Latin America Elkin uses the Argentine case as prototypical, perhaps because of the large bibliography on the topic. This does, however, lead to a skewed orientation. A chapter on “Jews and non-Jews” carefully looks at Jewish political participation in Argentina while other countries receive only a few pages of mention. Indeed, the focus on Argentina leads to one of the most surprising gaps in an otherwise strong book: a lack of information on Brazil, the country with Latin America’s second largest Jewish community. The comment that “Argentina is the only country in Latin America where considerable numbers of Jews settled elsewhere than the national capital” (119) does not take into consideration that most Brazilian Jews live (and lived) in São Paulo (not Rio de Janeiro or more recently Brasilia) and that Brazil has large Jewish populations in a number of other cities throughout the country. The presence of Jewish participation in modern Brazilian political life receives a scant paragraph of attention (269) while a very useful chapter on agricultural colonies (105–29) simply ignores the Jewish Colonization Association colonies in southern Brazil (they receive very brief mention in an earlier section on mass immigration) in spite of an extensive bibliography on the topic. An illustration of S. E. Castan’s recent Brazilian publication of Henry Ford’s anti-Semitic The International Jew is accompanied by the caption “Henry Ford’s scurrilous International Jew is among the anti-Semitic pamphlets widely sold at newspaper kiosks throughout Latin America.” While this may be true in some places, it is certainly not true in Brazil where Castan has been subject to numerous crimi-
nal proceedings, including a conviction last year for publishing anti-Semitic material. Indeed, such material is not available in newspaper kiosks, and to find anti-Semitic literature in Brazil takes a concerted effort, much like it does in the United States.

These criticisms aside, *The Jews of Latin America* is an important and useful book. A chapter comparing Latin American and United States Jewry proposes interesting parallels and makes an excellent teaching tool. Elkin’s discussion of recent anti-Semitism is generally careful, especially her discussion of how charges that the Nicaraguan Sandinista government was anti-Semitic were manipulated, without foundation, in the United States political sphere.

The revised edition of *The Jews of Latin America* is a welcome addition to both Latin American and Jewish historiography and its publication in a paperback edition is important. Judith Laikin Elkin is to be commended for both the comprehensive original and the up-to-date revision. With it she has reminded us of how a single academic work can create a broad field of study.

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Book Reviews


The American experience of Yiddish-speaking Jews and their descendants has so dominated scholarly attention as to all but obscure a parallel experience. Beginning in the early years of this century, tens of thousands of Sephardic speakers of Ladino, Greek, Turkish, Hebrew, and Arabic migrated to the lower East Side and Brooklyn as well as to such far-flung places as Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Seattle.

In _Sephardic American Voices_, Professor Diane Matza works effectively in rectifying that situation by providing a broad overview of the Sephardic American experience in the words of poets, memoirists, fiction writers, essayists, and dramatists. The collection comprises only those writers who work in English, which is unfortunate, as it largely precludes letting the immigrants speak for themselves. Even so, through memory, investigation, and imagination, their descendants have a great deal to tell both the scholarly and the nonscholarly reader. Collectively, they offer a splendid introduction to a rich and colorful strand of the American Jewish experience.

Professor Matza divides her collection into half a dozen sections, beginning with a short prelude on colonial Sephardim and their descendants. Selections from Emma Lazarus bear rereading. Take, for example, the penultimate stanza of _The Banner of the Jew_ in which Lazarus speaks as loudly and clearly to American Jewry today as she did to Americanized Jews of her own generation:

0 deem not dead that martial fire,
   Say not the mystic flame is spent!
With Mose's law and David's lyre,
   Your ancient strength remains unbent.
Let but an Ezra rise anew,
   To lift the Banner of the Jew!

Whereas Lazarus's Jewishness brings her voice to life, the same cannot be said for her literary descendants—as represented here by Annie Nathan Meyer and Robert G. Nathan—whose Jewishness is either submerged to the point of insignificance or is forced, occasional, or conventional.
The American Sephardic experience beginning in the early twentieth century yields much richer literary rewards. The book's next section, "Memoirs of the Homeland," opens with a selection from *Farewell to Salonica* by Leon Sciaky, who migrated to this country as a teenager in the early years of this century. Much later in life Sciaky evoked the warp and woof of life for Jews when the Turkish flag still waved over Salonica.

And again, the conversation would change. Hussein Agha of Seslovo, the bey of the domain adjoining ours to the southeast, had given Nono a gift of several pounds of sheep's-milk cheese packed in five-gallon tins. Such a superlative cheese was not to be found at the market place! Yussefico would be summoned to bring in a large piece then and there, and everyone must sample it and exclaim at its unusual creaminess.

In the pre-state of Israel Moslem world, where neither the subject of pork, nor the divinity of Jesus, nor one's Semitic identity posed a problem in and of itself, it is hardly surprising that Jews sopped up with their sheep's-milk cheese many of the likes and dislikes of the host cultures. Cigarettes and Turkish or Greek coffee (depending on one's residence) are ubiquitous in recollections of the Old World and immigrant ghetto. "One chain smoked cigarettes," Michael Castro recalls in a poem called "Grandfathers," "rolled his own / with the butt of the last."

The value to the scholarly community of such rich recollections when multiplied a thousandfold is considerable, from both a literary and a historical perspective. Collectively, *Sephardic American Voices* offers a rich sampling of Sephardic life in action, both here and abroad, that would be hard to match in any other single-volume work in Sephardic American studies.

The role of women, economic pursuits, family relations, religious concerns, generational conflicts, and Jewish identity problems are just a few of the recurring motifs in this collection. All of the above appear in Stanley Sultan's tour-de-force novel, *Rabbi*. Like so many other selections presented here, *Rabbi* is an example of Sephardic American writing at its finest.

Professor Matza finds in Sultan "much in common with the fifties' and sixties' novels of Bellow and Malamud." I am reminded more of a gentler Philip Roth. Sultan's protagonist, Jason Djubal, is portrayed against a background of three post-World War II worlds—the crumbling lower East Side neighborhood of his Syrian-born grandfather,
Rabbi Jacob Djubal; the Seagate, Brooklyn, environs of his father Reuben and his Ashkenazi mother Shirley; and the Coney Island highways and byways of Jason’s adolescent bike-riding buddies. The novel begins there, with Jason and his non-Sephardic friend Wacky studying the sky as intently as Rabbi Djubal might pore over the Talmud:

Jason studied it until the B and E directly overhead were only wisps of smoke and B A C O N extending north toward Manhattan had more than begun to crumble against the clear sky, but still neither he nor Wacky could make out what came after the z in the fifth word—or any of the long sixth on being excreted like an exploding white entrail by the speck of a plane low on the northern horizon. . . . Jason squinted.

Cheap bastards, he said, trying to cover the whole fucking city with one ad. It’s the new sliced pastrami’s what it is, Wack. Beef bacon, New from Zion National. You want to bet? Kosher bacon; and he snorted.

That’s no good too for you Ayrabs? The stuff’s delicious. Wacky paused, then said Can’t touch the real thing though, kid, and laughed in a series of shrieking inhalations.

As always Jason had spoken as one of the people, the fanatics his non-Arabic friends said their parents called them privately. And as always he quickly came to feel that, no longer practicing his Judaism faithfully or even holding to it firmly, he had no right to say so.

*Rabbi* begins the second half of this collection, where the focus is mainly on the struggle of retaining a Sephardic Jewish identity with the disappearance of palpable Old World connections. Contributors to these sections pick up, in a way, where Emma Lazarus left off, by urging American-born Jews to come alive as Jews through conscience, imagination, and collective memory.

A collection of this kind, by its very nature, cannot be all inclusive. Yet one wishes more attention had been paid to the workings of the Old World and immigrant communities that serve as foundations for what is to come. Such themes as social and intellectual activities in clubs, societies, restaurants, cafes, and newspaper offices, life on the streets and in the sweatshops, the synagogue as house of prayer and
socializing agency are all but ignored. Instead, family life in the home constitutes the principal focus of attention in the immigrant and Old World sections.

Missing from this collection is a guide of the stature of Abraham Cahan, editor of the Yiddish Forverts for half a century, taking the likes of William Dean Howells and Henry James by the hand and explaining with a sociological eye the intricacies of life as it is lived no more in our day. The strength of this collection lies elsewhere—in the voices of contemporary Sephardic American writers celebrating their membership in klal Yisroel, the community of Israel, in a diversity of ways.

A number of fine examples are contained in selections from the poetry of Linda Ashear:

I shed my past like willow leaves
Each Autumn I turn yellow like the sun
& spring to life each May
to weep green tears that soak the earth,
  warm soil where my roots lay buried.

and Stephen Levy:

Unhurried,/we will come to tall trees/all abloom, then/
with ease we will sway in the wind, and hum/as one

In 1987 Professor Matza wrote an article published in American Jewish Archives entitled “Sephardic Jews in America: Why Don’t They Write More?” Ten years later, one is struck by the number represented in this anthology who write so well.

Dr. Kenneth Libo is author of All in a Lifetime, a memoir of John and Frances Lehman Loeb, and We Lived There Too, a history of the westward movement of Jews in America. He is co-author with Irving Howe of World of Our Fathers, for which they shared a National Book Award, and How We Lived.
"We don’t want bloodshed. We want to use the ballot box and the jury box. We don’t want to go to the cartridge box, but we will if we have to." Thus declared John Trochmann, who in February 1994 founded the Militia of Montana, the most important of the "citizens' militias." The emergence of these paramilitary units in the wake of two badly bungled federal operations, the Ruby Ridge (Idaho) standoff with white supremacist Randy Weaver in 1992 and the Branch Davidian operation in Waco (Texas) in 1993, was a development on the American right that alarmed many observers. Other incentives for the formation of militias included gun control legislation in 1993–94—the Brady Bill and the assault weapons ban—and the efforts of federal land management personnel and environmentalists to control the exploitation of the natural resources of the West. To be sure, the militias were far from novel institutions, as similar paramilitary groups had existed in the previous three decades, such as the Minutemen in the 1960s, Posse Comitatus and the Order in the 1970s and 1980s, and units identified with various Ku Klux Klan bodies and the white supremacist Aryan Nations Church. However, by 1990 they had faded from the picture after leaving a trail of violence and bloodshed.

An explosive development of militias ensued in 1994, and by April 1995 there were such groups in thirty-six states, some of which craved media attention like those in Montana and Michigan while others preferred to prepare for war quietly. Even in my own community in Indiana, a conservative Republican political activist and evangelical church member organized a Vigo County Citizens’ Militia. But what really focused public attention on the militia phenomenon was the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995. The suspects in this the most deadly act of domestic terrorism in American history, Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, had connections to and shared the ideology of the militia movement.

In the following months a journalistic feeding frenzy took place, as newspaper and magazine writers ferreted out information about the militias and each tried to outdo the others in sensationalistic reporting. Within a few months in 1996 three books had appeared that covered essentially the same ground: the title under review by Kenneth S. Stern, the American Jewish Committee’s expert on terrorism and hate groups; Gathering Storm: America’s Militia Threat (Harper Collins) by
Morris Dees of the Southern Poverty Law Center and ghostwritten by James Corcoran, whose 1990 book *Bitter Harvest* dealt with the Posse Comitatus; and *American Militias: Rebellion, Racism and Religion* (InterVarsity Press) by Richard Abanes, a California–based specialist on new religious movements who directed his work specifically to the evangelical Protestant community. There was a chapter on militias in John George and Laird Wilcox's *American Extremists* (Prometheus Books, 1996), and I know of other titles in production.

Stern points out that although the "Christian patriots" of the 1990s are heirs of the antigovernment paramilitary units and tax resisters of earlier years, they are in some ways new. They target the government first rather than minorities, they communicate through the Internet more than newsletters, and they are a loose network of groups without a centrally controlled organization. In fact, "leaderless resistance" is the hallmark of the movement; the militias function as independent cells without reporting to a headquarters or single leader for instruction or direction. Stern concedes that militia members do not define themselves as belonging to hate groups but as citizens trying to reclaim and preserve a way of life under attack. They draw upon their neighbors' shared concerns about gun control, the environment, and abortion to combat outside forces such as the government and hidden power groups that are trying to change the way they live. Thus conspiracy theories and paranoia abound among leaders and followers alike.

In their view the chief enemy is the government, particularly the federal level. They maintain the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms was intended to defend the people against the government. Stern quotes a Militia of Montana statement:

> To balance the military power of the nation with the might of the militia will put at odds any scheme by government officials to use the force of the government against the people. Therefore, when the codes and statutes are unjust for the majority of the people, the people will rightly revolt and the government will have to acquiesce without a shot being fired, because the militia stands vigilant in carrying out the will of the people in defense of rights, liberty, and freedom. The purpose of government is the protection of the rights of the people. When it does not accomplish this, the militia is the crusade
who steps forward, and upon it rests the mantle of the rights of the people. (72-73)

The Michigan Militia swore an oath to uphold and defend the "organic" Constitution of the United States (which included only the first ten amendments) against all "tyrants" who would commit the sacrilege of breaking this sacred document. Thus a kind of religious sanction was given to the conspiratorial message of the militias. They would resist the political takeover of America by the United Nations and those who advocated a new world order. The evil government now in charge was beholden to "one world" masters and was amassing "black helicopters" to round up people and place them in concentration camps. Even markers were put on road signs to aid the invading Russian or Gurkha troops in the service of the UN as they overran the country. The religious imagery in the militia conspiracy ideology was the new world order, Satan's kingdom foretold in the Book of Revelation where everyone would carry "the mark of the beast."

Some commentators on the militias see them as essentially harmless, that is, overgrown boys acting out their fantasies by playing soldier in the woods on weekends; or they argue the media have grossly overestimated their size and influence. Others (especially civil libertarians) are disturbed by the manner in which government and law enforcement officials infiltrate the groups, and they fear a type of McCarthy-era hysteria is gripping the nation, albeit on the other end of the political spectrum. Stern, to the contrary, takes the movement very seriously and uses the argument of Montana human rights watchdog Ken Toole that the militias are like a funnel moving through space. At the front end it picks many people by hitting on issues that have wide appeal like gun control and environmental restrictions. Going further into the funnel, ideology emerges—the oppressiveness of the federal government. Then still further in, one reaches the belief systems, the grand conspiracy, Illuminati, Freemasons, One Worlders, Jews. Finally, at the narrowest end is the hard core, where someone like Timothy McVeigh pops out. Moreover, white supremacy and anti-Semitism are central to much of the militia thinking. Although the rank and file are drawn in by other issues, particularly that evil forces have taken over the government, many of the leaders are open anti-Semites, literature from anti-Semitic and white supremacist writers are available on book tables at every meeting, the ideas of "states' rights" and "county supremacy" are covers for bigotry, and the
conspiracy theories underlying the movement have their roots in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

Stern argues that the Federal Bureau of Investigation is unwilling to move against the militias mainly because they look too much like mainstream America and the FBI itself. They are a mass phenomenon, attracting "average" people (that is, conservative white males), and the FBI would more likely give them the benefit of the doubt than, say, Black Panthers or Skinheads. More disturbing is the way in which certain lawmakers—Senator Larry Craig and Representative Helen Chenoweth of Idaho, Representative Steve Stockman of Texas, and Colorado state senator Charlie Duke—openly supported the militias and local resistance movements. Televangelist Pat Robertson, no longer having a communist conspiracy and "evil empire" to rail against, contributed to "mainstreaming" the paranoid idea of Washington as the new manifestation of evil, especially in his 1991 book *The New World Order*.

Stern's volume is informative and disturbing but not the last word on the topic. Although the research is impressive, especially its use of Internet materials, the author apparently did not do much actual field work. He could have strengthened the book by using the best study on the neo-Nazi extremists, Mark S. Hamm's *American Skinheads: The Criminology and Control of Hate Crime* (Praeger, 1993), and this reviewer's papers on Christian anti-Semitism and British-Israel conspiracy thinking. Also, his demand for legislative action against paramilitary groups rings a little hollow, inasmuch as he had been the attorney for the radical American Indian movement, a group hardly committed to nonviolence. Also, is "hate" an exclusive practice of the extreme right? How about the anti-Semitic blatherings of the Nation of Islam?


This volume is a collection of fifteen articles published in the past fifteen years by Jeffrey Gurock, professor of American Jewish history at Yeshiva University, on the history of Orthodox Jews and Judaism in the United States. It possesses both the virtues and the faults of the genre of "collected articles."

The virtues are many. Gurock is one of the prime movers in a resurgence of interest in the history and sociology of American Orthodoxy over the past couple of decades. He is arguably its most prominent historian and thus offers an important complement to the plethora of sociological and social–anthropological studies of contemporary Orthodox communities.

A perusal of the studies enables the reader to appreciate exactly how much the author has in fact contributed to our understanding of the development of the field, both methodologically and substantively. We are able to follow Gurock when, in the course of research for his doctoral dissertation, which became the book When Harlem Was Jewish (1978), his findings caused him to question some basic hypotheses of Louis Wirth, Nathan Glazer, and Marshall Sklare concerning the sociology and history of Orthodox Jews and Judaism in the United States. We are able to accompany him as his search for his own answers to the problems he addressed caused him first to propose and then to refine and modify a hypothesis of a spectrum of accommodation and resistance on the part of Orthodox Jews to the juggernaut of Americanization in the United States in the first decades of this century. We are also privileged to see, from several angles and in several contexts, his interpretation of the phenomenon of the Agudath ha–Rabbanim and his resurrection of the communal career and controversies of the Orthodox Americanizer, Albert Lucas. As in many such collections of separately published articles, there is also some repetition and redundancy.

If one can fault this book at all, it is that it does not quite live up to the promise of the title. One expects from the title given the book, American Jewish Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective, that there will be an effort to create something of a comprehensive history of Orthodoxy in America. Such a book is needed and Gurock is certainly eminently capable of providing us with one. However, in point of fact Gurock did not design his studies, for the most part, to provide a comprehensive
picture. The major exceptions are his first two studies, on the Orthodox rabbinate and synagogue, respectively. These studies are indeed excellent and comprehensive (given the state of the field when they were written) building blocks for any eventual history. The bulk of the articles are more focused in time and space. They take a close and discerning look at New York in the period between the mass East European immigration of the late nineteenth century and the onset of World War II. Only the last two articles look somewhat tentatively beyond the 1940s and, for the most part, only sporadically do we glimpse the realities of Orthodox life in that vast hinterland beyond the reach of the New York subway system that New York Orthodox Jews are wont to call "out of town."

Gurock’s collection of articles deserves great appreciation for what it does do. It has successfully challenged previous scholarly paradigms and replaced them with other, more appropriate paradigms that are themselves in the process of modification and perfection. It has also set the stage upon which a comprehensive history will emerge. To paraphrase the anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, Gurock has searched for and found the local truths of American Orthodox Jewry through his detailed historical microanalyses. Anyone interested in the phenomenon of American Orthodoxy will find much of value in this collection.

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The question of audience is what one asks when reading Anthony Julius's *T. S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism, and Literary Form*. To the Jewish reader, the impact and effect of anti-Semitism is more than just an old story; it is synonymous with who we are and how we define ourselves. But to gentile readers, the nature of anti-Semitism and its manifestations are as foreign as the Jews themselves. For Julius, the history of the Jew is reflected in the art and culture of the time, even by those who claim not to have political or ideological agendas. It is common to assume, even desirable to assume, that art and literature transcend politics and bigotry, that they address the universal human condition, and that as man or woman, black or Caucasian, Jew or Gentile, we can all relate to the essence of art that binds us as human beings.

Julius dissents. He states that his reading of T. S. Eliot's work is "adversarial." But rather than merely accuse Eliot of anti-Semitism, as both Jewish and gentile critics alike have done, he insists that we give Eliot's anti-Semitism a literary analysis, and to fail to do so is "a failure of interpretation" and is to "misread the poems." To study the anti-Semitism in the work is a way of studying the work. For Julius, separating aesthetics from politics or ideology is impossible. Julius's audience is one that believes in the universal transcendence of art, one that is blinded to the insidious ways anti-Semitism expresses itself. In a lengthy introduction he prepares his reader for such an argument by sketching out the history of Eliot's career, the critical portrait of Eliot as an anti-Semite, the national contexts of anti-Semitism, and the relation between anti-Semitism, misogyny, and racism. He also defines "literary anti-Semitism," which is the crux of his argument.

Julius contends that Eliot was an anti-Semite of the rarest kind, "one who was able to place his anti-Semitism at the service of his art." Anti-Semitic discourse is semantically thick and the "Jew" is an overdetermined entity. In it there is a stockroom of clichés about Jews that each new generation employs in innovative ways. Eliot's anti-Semitic poetry must be read as an assertion of the productiveness of anti-Semitism. Through close textual readings of Eliot's poetry and prose, Julius illustrates the way Eliot uses his anti-Semitism to create a poetics and poetry. Eliot did not just take over a tired and commonplace anti-Semitic discourse, an inheritance of early twentieth-century British society, but he "enlivened ... fatigued topoi" and used the
conventions to “fresh and disturbing effects.” His reworking of these figures of speech is an instance of the larger project of reworking the figures of European literature. Julius asks what the connections between anti-Semitism and modernism really are. If there is a weakness in his book, it is that he doesn’t really answer this most interesting question beyond stating that poems don’t cease to be poems because they articulate anti-Semitic themes, and that there is nothing about poetic language that is especially resistant to anti-Semitism. Another study still needs to be written to address the relation between anti-Semitism and the modernist movement.

In the second chapter of the book Julius looks at Eliot’s poem “Gerontion” and explains the connection between poetic form and anti-Semitic ideology. “Gerontion” is a dramatic monologue placed within the tradition of Browning and Tennyson. According to Julius’s analysis, “Eliot’s assault on the form of the dramatic monologue is accomplished by the trivialization of the Jew” and the “lines in the poem depend for their effect on the received notion of the Jews. It is an effect that takes for granted a certain notion of Jewish history.”

Eliot’s landlord in the poem, “the squatting jew,” is contextualized by Julius within the cultural history of the “diseased” Jew. In the process of his interpretation, Julius not only describes the metaphoric connotations that the “Jew” carried in British culture, but he also confronts the Jewish critics of Eliot and explains why it is that these critics have historically been unwilling to take offense at Eliot’s views.

Chapter 3, on Eliot’s “Sweeney Among the Nightingales” and “Burbank,” and chapter 4 on “Dirge,” “A Cooking Egg,” and The Wasteland, further pursue the poetics of anti-Semitism. In his readings of these poems, Julius sees anti-Semitism as the proper concern of literary criticism. He defines and then rejects two arguments. The first asserts that because poetry cannot be propositional, it lapses into prose when it descends into anti-Semitism. The second asserts that because poetry discloses truths, it cannot articulate the wicked, false doctrine of anti-Semitism. Julius contends that poetry can be propositional and that literary works may be written to dramatize and empower a set of beliefs. Against the second argument he contends that poetry may, but need not, disclose truths.

If we reject Julius’s thesis that poetry can in fact be propositional, chapter 4 declares that we cannot deny that Eliot’s prose, the language of proposition, is full of anti-Semitic discourse. In works such as
Eliot's *After Strange Gods, The Idea of a Christian Society,* and *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture,* he criticizes and warns against the "free-thinking Jew" who, because he questions the beliefs of Judaism without accepting Christianity, is even more dangerous than the conservative, practicing Jew. It is the intellectual Jew, even the artist and writer, against whom Eliot cautions his reader. Julius explains how Eliot's prose, in contrast to his poetry, offends by being symptomatic of the "fissures and flaws of his reasoning" and merely arranges certain clichés of anti-Semitism in unsatisfactory combinations. What makes Eliot's poetry so effective, in contrast, is Eliot's ability to deploy anti-Semitic topics with "unnerving skill."

In the final chapter of the book, "Making Amends, Making Amendments," Julius catalogs the ways in which writers make amends for the anti-Semitic works. Often this is accomplished through the writing of a new work that repudiates the earlier anti-Semitism. Julius briefly discusses the work of Charles Dickens, Ezra Pound, Allen Ginsburg, Wyndham Lewis, and Paul DeMan to illustrate the variations and types of recantation. Eliot, ultimately, does not recant. Though he acknowledges the existence of anti-Semitic discourse in his poetry and prose, he tries to justify it, to depoliticize it, so that it is his readers, to his mind, who are placing political meaning into his work. Eliot sees his work as aesthetically pure and purifying, beyond the ideological bias of which he is accused. He is the ideal reader of Julius's book.

Anthony Julius does not deny that Eliot was a great poet. He argues that it is Eliot's anti-Semitism and his ability to employ it in his poetry that reflects his skill. Julius rightly and convincingly calls on his readers to consider the effect of an inherited discourse and the power that such a discourse has in poetry, when masterfully used, to move the minds and hearts of readers.

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Isaac Bashevis Singer was a very complex man who seemed, on the surface, a sweet and charming soul. This persona was assiduously cultivated by him in his later years. Janet Hadda, in her recent biography, digs below this surface to reveal the many layers that made up the personality of the winner of the 1978 Nobel Prize for Literature.

Hadda is peculiarly suited to her task. On the one hand, she is a professor of Yiddish, a master of the language and its literature. On the other hand, she is a professional psychoanalyst, trained to probe for motivations of behavior below surface appearances.

In her book, Hadda begins with Singer’s childhood in Warsaw, then moves back in time to describe his father, Rabbi Pinkhos Menahem Singer, and his upbringing. She pays special attention to Isaac’s mother, Basheve Singer nee Zylberman, whose name Isaac took for his Yiddish signature, Yitskhok Bashevis, and for his middle name in English. “She was above all, a powerful intellect. She knew much more about scholarly matters than other women of similar background and standing. Perhaps most important for the family dynamic, since it served to create endless conflicts between her and her husband, she was a rationalist” (19).

Hadda then digs even further into the family background of both parents. She tells us about Singer’s grandparents and their other children and about the Galician town of Bilgoray where Singer was born and which served as the locus for many of his stories.

The book is divided into three fairly equal parts. Chapters 1 through 3 deal with Singer’s life in Poland until April 1935, when he left for New York. Chapters 4 through 8 deal with the next thirty-five years, his writing in Yiddish for various periodicals, the first Stations into English, his meeting with Alma and their marriage, and his entry into the American world of letters. Chapter 9 begins, “By the early 1970s, Yitskhok Bashevis had lost the competition with Isaac Bashevis Singer. Yitskhok Bashevis, the sophisticated Yiddish writer whose imagination had once shuttled between Warsaw and Bilgoray, between his father’s Hasidic spirit and his mother’s rational understanding, between secular art and religious devotion, was all but eclipsed. In his place, Isaac Bashevis Singer, the English language chronicler of immigrant life and container of a vanished realm, was stepping into the limelight with increasing confidence and energy” (163).
In her psychoanalytic mode, Hadda sees a "fundamental and lasting contradiction in Bashevis's life. He could not be, simultaneously, the worldly wise and sharp-witted gadfly the Yiddish journalists loved to hate, and the frail and childlike anthropological guide the American critics and readers read with damp-eyed nostalgia...[his] attempt to integrate the two divergent claims on his life was not a success" (140).

Much of the last part of the book deals with these contradictions and how Singer tried to cope with them. While Hadda admires Singer the writer, she is able to view Singer the man more objectively. Her book is full of insights into the complexities of Singer's soul. Hadda researched his family, interviewed many people who knew him, and read widely the literature by and about him. Her notes and index are what one would expect from a scholar of stature. Hadda's biography can be appreciated by readers in and out of academia.

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Book Reviews


In his memorable article, “Moses,” Ahad Ha’am—one of the ideological architects of modern Zionism—distinguishes between “historical” and “archaeological” truths. He argues that the “Moses” depicted in the Jewish sources is not necessarily the figure of the man who lived more than 3,500 years ago and is actually an idealization reflecting the spirit and inner aspirations of the Jewish people. As time proceeds, we become more aware of similar implications of our coping with the “historical truth” regarding the “Jewish fate” in the Holocaust. Between the present and the Holocaust there have been amassed layers upon layers of new experiences and memories, many of which may have some bearing on our conception of the Jewish fate in the Holocaust. Consequently, we are compelled to cope with an increasing range of conflicting meanings and competing symbols of the Holocaust. Today, more than fifty years after the Holocaust, we are therefore much more aware of the fact that our memory of the Holocaust reflects the manner that we, the post-Auschwitz generation—in Berger’s words, the “children of Job”—seek to conceive our own Jewish identity.

One of the signs of this growing awareness has been the intensified trend of much research, especially since the middle of the 1980s, to take up not only the Holocaust itself but also the various layers and symbols representing the development of Jewish coping with the memory of the Holocaust. This book is part of this general trend, and its focus is on novels and films of children of Holocaust survivors. At the core of this book is the assumption that the offspring of Jewish Holocaust survivors inherit the Holocaust as an irreducible part of their Jewish self-identity and that their particular coping with the Holocaust has great bearing on the relationship between the Holocaust and contemporary Jewish identity in general.

The book’s focus is therefore less on the Holocaust itself than on its translation by us, the post-Auschwitz generation. Struggling to understand this catastrophic event, our generation is torn between two “lessons” of how to survive after the Holocaust and to prevent its recurrence. It is a dilemma between a particularistic lesson of strengthening and safeguarding Jewish identity, and a universalistic lesson of struggling for a better and a more just world—one in which all forms of anti-Semitism, homophobia, and racism are abolished. Berger uses this dilemma to categorize a wide range of writers and
filmmakers, dividing them between those who wrestle with the meaning of Jewish identity after Auschwitz and those who emphasize what they perceive to be the Holocaust’s universal message. He claims that while the particularist authors express distrust of the social world and therefore focus on a *tikkun* (mending) of the self and of family relations, the universalist authors highlight the moral example of non-Jewish rescuers as a model of their optimistic belief in *tikkun olam*, a repair or mending of the world and of ordinary decency.

Despite his emphasis throughout the book on a systematic analysis of the different particularistic and universalistic aspects of each of the reviewed publications, Berger’s most intriguing observation relates to the common themes that emerge among both particularist and universalist authors. The most important among them is the understanding of the post-Holocaust covenant between God and His people that insists that the burden of maintaining this covenant now rests on the shoulders of humanity. Berger finds that “second-generation witnesses, in all their diversity, are among the primary architects of this post-Auschwitz covenant that acknowledges both the fact of divine absence and the need for Jewish identity.”

Perhaps what is missing in this description is a wider historical perspective that would place the emergence of this post-Auschwitz understanding in a larger context of the post-Enlightenment shift from the belief in a transcendental divine redemption to a belief in a social and political one. On the background of this larger historical context, Berger’s discussion of post-Holocaust Jewish identity seems lacking. It doesn’t give due attention to the post-Enlightenment particularistic–universalistic inner Jewish tension that was in fact an intrinsic part of the Jewish post-Enlightenment perplexing experience of feeling both accepted and rejected by the non-Jewish society. Although Jews of different backgrounds and ideologies had various and often contradictory methods of coping with this experience, they all shared a similar yearning of trying to maintain a balance of one sort or another between their desire to be accepted by the non-Jewish environment and their wish to preserve their distinctive identity. This basic experience with its intrinsic inner particularistic–universalistic dilemma was only highlighted—not created—by our confrontation with the memory of the Holocaust.

The need for a broader historical analysis becomes even more obvious while discussing the important psychosocial shift of the sec-
ond-generation witnesses' self-image, from viewing themselves as psychologically damaged people to perceiving themselves as vigorous guardians of their parents' Holocaust legacy. Again, this shift is only a part of a larger psychosocial American-Jewish transformation, affecting the self-image of American Jewry in general as well as its attitude toward various aspects of American Jewish life, the Holocaust being only one of them. Berger's justified assertion regarding the general implications of his analysis might benefit greatly from such a comprehensive historical discussion.

An overall view of Berger's work may give a true sense of the dialectic nature of our post-Auschwitz attempt to cope with the memory of the Holocaust. For both particularist and universalist authors the confrontation and perhaps even the cultivation of their memory of the Holocaust is the only possible means of achieving their quest for a positive and "normal" self-identity. In Berger's words, fifty years after the event, second-generation witnesses are attempting to move forward Jewishly while symbolically carrying the "memory bones" of the victims. In this sense, this book serves an important purpose. It gives readers an overview and presents them with a wide range of universalistic and particularistic "solutions" of how to turn the memory of an abnormal catastrophe into an important and integral part of a normal personality. Regarding the dilemma between particularism and universalism we may ask ourselves whether fifty years after the Holocaust one can forfeit either the particularistic lesson of ensuring the very existence of the Jewish people, or the equally important lesson of a Jewish universalistic and humanistic mission. Granted that different segments within post-Holocaust Jewish society will give various and even conflicting answers, perhaps the questions themselves can serve as a future basis for a revived pluralistic Jewish solidarity.

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Around the year 1880, just before the great trans-Atlantic migration of East European Jews began, the ten largest Jewish communities in the United States, each with Jewish populations of 5,000 or more, were in New York City, San Francisco, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago, Cincinnati, Boston, Saint Louis, and New Orleans. In years gone by, nine of these communities have been the subject of one or more substantial historical studies, but it is only now, with the appearance of the first volume of Walter Ehrlich's *Zion in the Valley*, that a large part of the history of Saint Louis Jewry has been treated in a comprehensive survey.

Ehrlich's book begins with a discussion of the possibility that Jewish traders visited the site of Saint Louis even before the town was founded and then goes on to consider the first hundred years of the Jewish experience in the city. The book deals with subjects such as the arrival of Central European Jews in Saint Louis and the founding of the city's first Jewish institutions, the creation of a coterie of what Ehrlich calls "civic and economic stalwarts" and "mercantile giants" within the local Jewish community, and the early history of East European Jewish settlement in the city. The projected second volume of this study will cover the Jewish experience in Saint Louis in the twentieth century.

Much of the narrative of *Zion in the Valley* consists of institutional history; the book tells about a vast array of congregations, philanthropic societies, schools, social clubs, and newspapers. Biographical accounts of dozens of influential individuals also make up a substantial part of the narrative, so readers learn about a number of interesting characters (the controversial Reform theologian Rabbi Solomon Sonneschein is an example here), and they are offered some intriguing bits of trivia (Flag Day was the brainchild of Saint Louis businessman Benjamin Altheimer, for instance).

This book seems to have been written primarily for a local audience. This helps explain why the text so often records street addresses that will be meaningful only to those familiar with the city of Saint Louis and also why the author feels the need to apologize in his preface for leaving out many particulars that might have been included, for not recording all the contributions to Saint Louis's Jewish history that might have been made by "friends or relatives" of his readers, and
for not taking up the story of the small Jewish settlements in Saint Louis's orbit. But the author's contrition is really quite unnecessary, for it is hard to imagine that there are communal institutions, significant personalities, or pivotal events from the first century of Saint Louis's Jewish history that are not covered in sufficient detail in this volume.

If anything, *Zion in the Valley* sometimes goes too far in providing particulars. Even those most intensely interested in Saint Louis's Jewish history are unlikely to need to know the cost of an umbrella in the first Jewish-owned store in the city, or the precise inscription on the ceremonial trowel used at the cornerstone laying for the B'naï El Temple in 1855, or the exact nature of the gift the children of Temple Israel presented to one of the congregation's supporters in 1903. As for not including the Jewish history of towns such as Cape Girardeau and Hannibal, these places clearly had their own identities in the nineteenth century, as Ehrlich perceptively acknowledges, and so there is no reason why their histories should have been included in this volume.

Walter Ehrlich is a scholar who has had a long career teaching and writing about American constitutional history; he has published books on the Dred Scott case and on presidential impeachment. His academic training is reflected in the fact that *Zion in the Valley* rests upon very careful research and a judicious evaluation of the available documents. Ehrlich's exhaustive mining of sources such as congregational archives, business records, contemporary newspapers, and personal memoirs is impressive, and his book contains numerous allusions to the difficulties he faced in his efforts to uncover accurate information about the history of the Saint Louis Jewish community. Much of the early part of his book, for example, is devoted to a consideration of several candidates for the title "first Jew" in Saint Louis, each rejected as questionable. Ehrlich's discussions of the research problems he faced serve a valuable purpose by enlightening readers about the way historians work, although sometimes the author gives in a little too much to the temptation to mention individuals with "Jewish-sounding" names whose identity as Jews cannot be established, or to comment on the relative accuracy of his various sources, or to report on the various dead ends to which he was led.

Ehrlich's training and experience prompt him from time to time to place Saint Louis's Jewish history in the context of American history more generally, and this greatly enhances the value of his study. For
example, his knowledge of U.S. economic history allows him to speculate about how the financial problems of the country at the end of the nineteenth century might help explain why the movement to establish a Jewish hospital in Saint Louis ran into difficulties in the 1890s.

Also reflecting Ehrlich’s academic background is the fact that even though Zion in the Valley is essentially a descriptive account, it is organized to some extent around the concept of communal unity. Ehrlich suggests that in its earliest stages the Saint Louis community had individual Jewish institutions but no sense of communal cohesion, and he contends that it was only in the late 1850s that the community began to behave as an organized whole. He argues that a protest mounted against a treaty that the United States had signed with the Swiss Confederation even though it allowed for discrimination against Jews was the first action that “demonstrated community concern” and led to “collective action” (122). Later, he points to the United Hebrew Relief Association, founded in 1871, as the “first organization to achieve communitywide cooperation within St. Louis Jewry” (227), and he goes on to describe how a sense of solidarity was lost in the last decades of the century as the masses of East European Jewish immigrants who arrived in Saint Louis established their own institutions and came to constitute a community quite distinct from the established Jewish society. Perhaps nothing symbolized the division between the two groups better than the fight over kashruth at Saint Louis’s original Jewish home for the elderly.

While it is clear that Ehrlich is firmly grounded in American history, he has immersed himself in the study of Jewish history only recently, and he seems to be a little less surefooted in that realm. This may be why he is reluctant to discuss the implications of his study for the larger picture of American Jewish history. For example, he could have called attention to the way his detailed account of debates over the nature of Reform Judaism in Saint Louis serves as an excellent case study of developments in America more generally. Ehrlich’s late entry into Jewish studies may also explain his book’s occasional lapses where general Jewish knowledge is concerned. Contrary to what Ehrlich says, for example, a minyan is preferable but not required for Jewish weddings and funerals; Reform Judaism originated not in the eighteenth century but in the early nineteenth; and halacha developed to govern Jewish life in general, not only in the Diaspora. So too, it is inaccurate to refer to the sixteenth-century codifier of Jewish law
Joseph Caro as "Spanish" (he lived in Turkey and in Palestine), and it is incorrect to say that the name of congregation Sheerith S'fard cannot be explained (the designation is based on the congregation's use of certain liturgical conventions adopted by East European Hasidim).

Also troubling is Ehrlich's reference to East European Jews as "Slavic." While calling Jews of Central European origin "German Jews" is both conventional and reasonable (they were, after all, from a geographic region called Germany and they did bring with them a great deal of German cultural baggage, including a vernacular), East European Jews are not and should not be called "Slavic Jews" because this designation reflects neither the geographic name of the region from which they came nor the cultural identity they carried with them. It is highly misleading to say that Yiddish-speaking East European Jews were "Slavic in background and culture" (246).

Zion in the Valley is in many ways a very nicely produced volume. It is a pleasure, for one thing, to find reference notes placed at the bottom of the page where readers can consult them easily. On the other hand, the book is not as carefully edited as it might have been, especially given the tremendous amount of data it attempts to record. On several occasions information provided in the narrative is restated in a footnote, and too often the same material appears more than once even in the body of the text. For example, the same passage from a 1914 reminiscence is quoted both on page 97 and on page 125. Similarly, readers are informed both on page 182 and on page 212 that in the mid-1860s congregation B'nai El discontinued the wearing of prayer shawls and began reading the Haftorah in German rather than in Hebrew. There are also some problems with the selection of illustrations for this book. It is not always clear how or why the various portraits, streetscapes, and building photos that appear in the volume were chosen, and the book's crudely drawn and poorly labeled sketch map purporting to locate Saint Louis's Jewish institutions and neighborhoods is simply an embarrassment.

Because it concentrates on institutions and elites, because it provides a profusion of details of interest primarily to local readers, and because it occasionally adopts a defensive tone (Ehrlich seems especially concerned to defuse the charge that early German Jewish settlers in Saint Louis abandoned their Jewish identity), in some respects Zion in the Valley continues the tradition of hagiographic and filiopietistic local histories that goes back a century and more. At the same
time, however, because it relies upon the careful research of a trained
historian, because it considers some larger themes such as the nature
of communal unity, and because it makes some attempts to see Saint
Louis's Jewish history in a larger context, this volume also represents
a more modern and professional approach to the writing of Jewish
community studies. Volume 1 of Zion in the Valley will certainly be the
standard reference work on the first hundred years of Saint Louis
Jewry for a long time to come, and as such it will be consulted profit-
tably both by individuals seeking to learn about their own commun-
ity and by students of the American Jewish experience in general.
Walter Ehrlich is to be commended for his very valuable contribution
to the literature of local Jewish history.

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When Abraham Karp's Haven and Home: A History of the Jews in America appeared in 1985, it was widely praised for its ambition, its heavy use of primary source documents, its comprehensive approach to the subject matter, and its close attention to detail. It was also critiqued, in these pages and others, for its uneven approach to American Jewish denominationalism and its neglect of recent scholarship in the field. Now comes this second edition, under the title A History of the Jews in America, which reproduces verbatim the text of the original edition, with the addition of a set of illustrations and a new appendix.

Karp's work remains a significant contribution to the well-noted effort to produce a comprehensive one-volume history of American Jewry. The significant percentage of primary sources included in this work continue to render it valuable as a classroom text. Nonetheless, it is clear that in the intervening twelve years, Karp has drawn little inspiration from the well-considered critiques offered by his reviewers in the 1980s.

The decision to reprint the original 1985 text without revision is puzzling, given the wealth of new scholarship in the field since Haven and Home was first published. Work by scholars such as Jenna Weisman Joselit (The Wonders of America, 1994), Andrew Heinze (Adapting to Abundance, 1990), and Deborah Dash Moore (To the Golden Cities, 1994), to name but a few, has expanded eloquently on the themes espoused by Karp, and it is therefore disappointing to find that this work does not inform Karp's new edition. If the demands of textual revision were deemed by the publisher too expensive and time consuming to pursue, the author could easily have given attention to recent scholarship by providing a selected bibliography—an addition that would have greatly enlarged the utility of this work for use in the classroom and as a guide to further research by the serious student.

The additions to the text that are included here in fact do little to broaden the scope or address the original critiques leveled against Haven and Home. Unlike the existing appendices, which consist of population and immigration statistics, the new appendix 5 updates the demographic data in chapter 14 ("Changes and Challenges") with new figures and extended quotes from several recent essays on the topics of intermarriage and Jewish Haven and Home and continuity.
What purpose the latter are intended to serve is left unclear to the reader, because they are excerpted here without adequate reference to their context by the author.

Further problems can be found in the so-called illustrations, many of which fail to serve the purpose for which they were designed. Bunched together between parts 1 and 2, most are without textual page references and some lack explanatory captions. For pedagogical purposes, one would have hoped to find the illustrations better integrated into the text, such as is commonly done with other recent ethnic histories. Moreover, fully a third of the images selected (twenty-four of sixty-eight) are themselves reproductions of text, primarily in the form of title pages to printed works (twenty items). The latter do little to advance the cause of visual representation of the themes discussed in the text, and they fail either to engage the reader or to illuminate effectively the topics for which they are doubtless intended to be representative. One illustration—a reproduction of the first-day issue of the Touro Synagogue postage stamp—is redundant and superfluous, inasmuch as a photograph of the Touro Synagogue is also included among the illustrations. Surely, better images could have been selected for this purpose; oil portraits and silhouettes of important early American Jews, invitations to nineteenth-century Purim balls, early twentieth-century Rosh Hashanah cards, Sabato Morais's Hebrew poem on the death of Abraham Lincoln, and a Yiddish advertisement for Teddy Roosevelt, all found in the collections of the American Jewish Historical Society (of which Professor Karp is a former president) spring readily to mind.3

In fact, the selection of illustrations, like the text itself, reflects the author's indifference to the important ancillary theme of secular adaptations to American life. On page 353, for example, Karp proclaims that "American Jewry defines itself as a religious community." This statement strikes me as peculiarly dismissive of the distinctive contributions to American Jewish culture made by Jews who did not define themselves primarily in terms of the synagogue. One thinks, for example, of the Jewish agricultural movement, most recently addressed in these pages by Mark Raider and Margalit Shilo,4 which has been reduced by Professor Karp to a single paragraph on page 179. A more significant defect is the omission of American Jews as radicals and radical reformers; neither August Bondi nor Ernestine Rose, both prominent abolitionists, is mentioned here, and Emma
Goldmann is cited only in a quote from her writings pertaining to someone else. Moreover, in his assessment of the survival of Judaism in America toward the end of the twentieth century, the growing impact of more recent attempts to redefine and reinvigorate Judaism—such as the Chavurah and the Jewish Renewal movement—is entirely neglected. Here the readers will be inundated with facts about the institutional core of American Jewish life but will learn little about the many important individuals and organizations who have operated at the margins of the American Jewish community from its inception in the seventeenth century and whose own sense of Judaism has been no less critical to the vitality of American Jewish life.

Though eminently accessible in its style and organizational scheme, *A History of the Jews in America* remains a work that should be employed cautiously. Supplementation from other sources is particularly advisable when using this work in the classroom. One would hope, at a minimum, that the third and subsequent editions of this work will attempt to augment its considerable strengths with a modicum of attention paid toward alleviating at least some of its significant weaknesses.

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NOTES


3. The Papers of Sabato Morais are located at the American Jewish Historical Society, while the postcard was posted by the society on its web page. See http://www.ajhs.org.

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