

REVIEW ESSAY

Social and Cultural Patterns in Twentieth-Century American Jewish Life

Stephen J. Whitfield, *In Search of American Jewish Culture* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1999), 307 pp.

Riv-Ellen Prell, *Fighting to Become Americans: Assimilation and the Trouble between Jewish Women and Jewish Men* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), 319 pp.

Allan M. Winkler

How have Jews fared in the twentieth century in the United States? What contributions have American Jews made to the larger society? And how have they worked out personal and professional issues as they interacted with and assimilated into the larger culture? Stephen J. Whitfield, professor of American Studies at Brandeis University, and Riv-Ellen Prell, professor of American Studies at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, perceptively address these questions and a host of others in two new books that provide new perspectives on the American Jewish experience over the past one hundred years.

The authors approach this experience from different angles. Whitfield is most concerned with the dynamics of American Jewish culture and the contributions Jews have made. Prell is most interested in the stereotypes Jewish men and women held of one another and how these changed over time. Together, they address the larger question of how a small but articulate minority became a part of the larger culture while changing it in the process.

Whitfield argues in his rich and detailed account that Jews have had a profound impact on American culture in the twentieth century. In a variety of different areas, including theater, music, literature, and film, he observes that they made contributions far out of proportion to their numbers and left the culture more colorful and intense than it was before.

Culture is a complex phenomenon, and Whitfield cites

anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss's comment that every culture is "the result of a mishmash." (4) He questions at the start what works should be included in such a compendium: "Should American Jewish culture be allowed to include works that do not bear directly on the beliefs and experiences of the Jews as a people? Or is any intellectual or artistic activity that they have initiated in the United States, whether or not such work bears traces of Jewish content, a contribution to American Jewish culture?" (19) Both are important, he concludes, and proceeds to assess "whatever individuals of Jewish birth... have contributed to art and thought." (20) Many such contributions were urban in character. And most, he notes, were related to the world of mass entertainment.

Whitfield's book begins with two absorbing chapters on musical theater and music. Jews filled half the seats in Broadway theaters, he tells us, and Jewish songwriters and composers helped shape the productions that entranced crowds. He records one account of Cole Porter asking George Gershwin for the secret of his success and being told to "write Jewish." (62)

Whitfield is at his best in analytic vignettes about such figures as Gershwin, composer of *Rhapsody in Blue*, which remains one of the most frequently performed piano concertos of the century. He describes how Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II embraced a transcontinental culture in *Oklahoma!* and recounts how Jerome Robbins, Leonard Bernstein, and Stephen Sondheim collaborated on their popular retelling of the Romeo and Juliet tale in *West Side Story*.

The book is filled with engaging anecdotes about such figures as songwriter Irving Berlin. "It was singing in *shul* that gave me my musical background," Berlin once observed. "It was in my blood." (98) Whitfield describes how Berlin composed what he considered "the best song I ever wrote," indeed, "the best song *anybody* ever wrote." (96) It was, of course, "White Christmas" for the film *Holiday Inn*, sung by Bing Crosby and more than three hundred artists in other recorded versions.

In "Shoah," Whitfield provides a powerful chapter on the growing awareness of American Jews, and American culture, of the Holocaust. He begins by noting sociologist Nathan Glazer's astonishing observation in 1957 that the Holocaust registered a "remarkably slight" impact on "the inner life" of American Jewry and points out that in the fifteen years between 1950 and 1965, the Jewish Publication

Society published only one book on the Holocaust. (171) He then traces the story of *The Diary of Anne Frank* and notes how the first stage version tended to minimize the Jewish part in favor of a more universal interpretation of the experience, complete with a hopeful ending that highlighted Anne's courage and confidence in the future, despite her actual death in a Nazi camp.

Whitfield goes on to note the impact of the television miniseries *Holocaust*, Art Spiegelman's Pulitzer Prize-winning comic book novel *Maus*, and finally Stephen Spielberg's brilliant Academy Award-winning film *Schindler's List*. These works helped Americans, and audiences around the world, confront the enormity of the barbarism that killed six million Jews.

As Whitfield draws toward the end of his account, he confronts the question of Jewish faith. "In the case of conflict with prevailing American norms of secular origin," he observes, "it is religion that is expected to compromise, or to adapt, or to surrender." (199) Sometimes, however, Jews resisted compromise. Whitfield records the stories of baseball players Hank Greenberg and Sandy Koufax, both of whom chose not to play in important games (in Koufax's case, the World Series) to observe Yom Kippur instead. In other circumstances, though, he notes the propensity to redefine holidays in contemporary terms, even to the extent of seeing how it might "be packaged as a Jewish counterpart to a Christian holiday." (200)

All this leads Whitfield to his final chapter. "Prospects," which suggests that "Only religion can form the inspirational core of a viable and meaningful Jewish culture." (224) In other words, the fate of Jewish culture "depends on faith." (224) After his lengthy and entertaining overview of different kinds of Jewish culture, Whitfield suggests that this culture cannot survive if Jewish religion disappears. Like other commentators who worry about assimilation and the disappearance of a strong sense of Jewish identity, he argues that this phenomenon threatens to undermine Jewish culture itself. Although the conclusion seems abrupt, and might have been foreshadowed in the statement of the argument earlier, it forces the reader to reflect on the stories that have come before with a sense of added concern.

Riv-Ellen Prell is less concerned with Jewish culture and more interested in Jewish identity. In her thoughtful and engaging book, she seeks to describe how Jews represented themselves in popular culture over the course of the twentieth century and to understand the

process of acculturation. Specifically, she seeks to understand both the external hostility they faced and the inner ambivalence they experienced as they struggled to survive and prosper in the larger society.

Prell begins her book by describing a workshop sponsored by the United Jewish Appeal in 1994 called "Jewish Men and Women: Can We Talk?" At the session, participants were asked to fill in the blanks verbally in the sentence "A Jewish man is. . .and a Jewish woman is..."(1) Jewish men and women then shouted out stereotypical descriptions of one another. Men declared that women were "calculating, narrow minded, spoiled,... challenging,... nagging,... demanding." Women declared that men were "egocentric, materialistic,... driven, spoiled,... looking for perfection,... and driven by power."(2) Such images, Prell suggests, are nothing new. They reflect "startling continuity" with similar stereotypes over the course of the century. (3)

Seeking to understand broader trends, as Jewish children moved beyond the bounds perceived by immigrant parents, Prell argues that "Children's loathing for their Jewish parents and Jewish women's and men's loathing for one another are some of the legacies of Americanization." (9) Jews sometimes internalized the feelings of other non-Jewish Americans who saw Jews as "marginal, obsessed with money, uncivil, and unworthy of citizenship" and applied them to one another, complicating the already difficult process of acculturation. (13) Prell's intriguing assessment is that "The tightly woven patterns linking class, gender, and ethnicity demonstrate that American Jews projected onto one another what frightened them most as they found their way into the Promised Land." (14)

Having established her focus, Prell looks at the "Ghetto Girls," Yiddish-speaking women from the East Side of Manhattan whose pictures often appeared in the socialist, working-class newspaper, the *Jewish Daily Forward*. The stereotype was of someone embodying not simply vulgarity but unregulated desire. Both middle-class Jews and non-Jewish progressive reformers (who were often anti-Semitic) looked down on such women.

Marriage, Prell observes, was important to these women and their male counterparts, for it contributed to a much-desired Americanization. Using fiction to support her historical arguments, Prell notes how author Anzia Yezierska captured this sense of longing

in her short stories for a marriage of one's own choice, rather than an arranged marriage. Inter-marriage occurred but was not widespread. Jews wanted to marry Jews, yet the process of "New World marriage produced anxiety and uncertainty about whether it could deliver its promises of class mobility and Americanization." (77) Abraham Cahan's novel *The Rise of David Levinsky* captured best of all a man caught between two worlds as he managed to achieve worldly success but never found the love he craved.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Prell suggests, "the Young Jewish Woman in Search of Marriage" threatened Jewish men. Women hoped to get ahead through marrying well at the very time that men were struggling to succeed in America. And so, she concludes perceptively, "These children of the immigrant Jewish working class fought one another on the battleground of middle-class hopes." (103) Most Jewish men who made it into the middle class did so by working, saving, and investing. Most women who managed to enter the middle class did so primarily as consumers.

Then, in Prell's chronology, World War II intervened and changed the nature of the debate. Between 1935 and 1945, American Jews were preoccupied with the horrifying events in Europe and with a corresponding anti-Semitism in the United States that limited mobility and undermined the effort to save victims of the Holocaust. In the 1940s, she declares, 15 to 24 percent of the overall American population considered Jews a "menace to America." (125)

Gender-rooted stereotypes returned in the 1950s, particularly in the guise of the Jewish Mother. She "pushed, wheedled, demanded, constrained, and was insatiable in her expectations and wants." (143) She also created in husbands and sons an overwhelming sense of guilt. Significantly, though, the stereotype was not solely confined to Jews. This was the time when author Philip Wylie, in his book *Generation of Vipers*, claimed that American mothers of all classes and religions had undermined national morale and weakened the moral fiber of the nation by their emasculating treatment of their sons.

Then, in the 1960s and 1970s in Prell's analysis, came the Jewish American Princess as a "ubiquitous stereotype of Jewish life." (178) The mirror image of the Jewish Mother, she too was insatiable in her demands while reluctant to do anything herself. In a highly entertaining but devastating chapter, Prell records some of the classic jokes, such as "What does a Jewish American Princess make for

dinner? Reservations.”(180) Ironically, though, at the very time the stereotype came to the fore, American society was experiencing the challenges that destroyed the cultural consensus of the postwar years and contributed to the rise of feminism in the United States.

Finally, in a chapter titled “Talking Back through Counter-Representations,” Prell addresses the last several decades of the twentieth century. In a fascinating section, she describes the sketches of Gilda Radner—and her Jewish American Princess character Rhonda Weiss—on television’s *Saturday Night Live*. Radner, Prell argues, created a character that no one hated.

Yet, Prell concludes, Jewish stereotypes still remain. Looking back at the entire century, sometimes reflecting on the experience of her own family, she notes the tensions and pressures that Jews still face, even after their achievement of social and economic gain. In her final paragraph she observes that “the astonishing persistence of Jewish gender stereotypes serves as a reminder that winning the fight to become Americans exacts a devastating price.”(245)

While Stephen Whitfield and Riv-Ellen Prell address the social and cultural patterns of twentieth-century American Jewish experience from different perspectives, both give us a vivid sense of the complicated issues of Jewish life. Whether dealing with the creative urge or the emotional imperative, Jews struggled with themselves and with the outside world to achieve the recognition and acceptance they craved. And though they often succeeded, whatever their quest, success came at a cost that sometimes left uncertain the future of Jewish culture and Jewish life.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Lisa Endlich, *Goldman Sachs: The Culture of Success* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 319 pp.

Goldman Sachs has been a first-tier Wall Street investment firm since the last decade of the nineteenth century. However, this powerful German Jewish brokerage house has received minimal attention from historians of finance. Lisa Endlich, a former vice president of and a foreign exchange trader for Goldman Sachs, has written the most comprehensive history of this major firm yet. In seven chronologically arranged chapters, Endlich presents a fascinating institutional account of this investment house and shows with great precision and thoroughness the many fields in which this firm excelled. Moreover, she effectively utilizes collective biography to describe and assess the achievements of Goldman's many and varied leaders in the world of finance. This study is based on important business records of this firm, other primary sources relating to the securities industry, and both oral histories and personal interviews. In this work, Endlich develops a cogent thesis: namely, that cooperation and teamwork have served as the basis of Goldman's business culture throughout its history and have contributed to its great success on Wall Street.

The primary reasons for the institutional success of Goldman Sachs through the years are impressively explained in the first chapter. The author claims that this firm has operated according to a simple horizontal management structure. Moreover, Goldman Sachs, for the most part, has been provided with capable leadership. Endlich also maintains that its leaders historically have emphasized the importance of long-term relationships with clients. She also believes that until recently becoming a public company, this firm operated quite well and profitably as a partnership that was cloaked in much secrecy.

The second chapter, which is titled "The Family Firm," traces the origins and development of Goldman Sachs as a private investment house between 1869 and 1976. Endlich identifies several major features that characterized this firm during these years. Marriage, a viable partnership structure, and cautious leadership enabled Goldman Sachs to develop into a prominent institution on Wall Street.

The author also presents vivid profiles of the firm's leaders during this era. A Philadelphia peddler and shopkeeper who came to America during the aftermath of the 1848 German revolutions, Marcus Goldman went to New York City in 1869 to open on Pine Street a firm that purchased and sold promissory notes. Endlich illustrates that Goldman's firm proved to be very lucrative. To increase and preserve his business, Goldman in 1882 formed a partnership with his son-in-law Sam Sachs; Goldman in the 1880s also brought into this partnership his son Henry and his son-in-law Ludwig Dreyfus.

After Goldman's retirement in the late 1890s, new leaders emerged at Goldman Sachs. Endlich offers an astute assessment of the firm under Henry Goldman and Sam Sachs. Under their direction, Goldman Sachs developed a huge underwriting business during the first two decades of the twentieth century; it earned great profits from the selling of railroad bonds and from the marketing of stock for Sears, Roebuck and Company, May department stores, and other retailers. Endlich especially makes a persuasive case for the leadership role of Sidney Weinberg. He was neither a Goldman nor a Sachs but served as an effective chairman of the firm's board between 1930 and 1969. Weinberg was a shrewd investment banker and became known for developing enduring and trustworthy client relationships with such firms as General Electric, Ford Motor, and Proctor & Gamble.

Endlich explains in the next four chapters how Goldman Sachs evolved into a "world-class player" between 1976 and 1994. Under the leadership of John Weinberg and John Whitehead, its management structure during the eighties improved; they, among other things, strengthened the committee operations of Goldman Sachs, insisting that department heads help in the formulation of policies through committee input. Through cooperative efforts especially on the committee level, the firm experienced dynamic expansion at this time: Goldman Sachs became a leader in the realm of mergers and acquisitions and was known for effectively utilizing a raid defense strategy to protect its clients from hostile buyers. As the guard began to change in this investment house, the talented and aggressive Bob Rubin and Steve Friedman were appointed in December 1991 as its co-chief executive officers; both men brought about positive change at Goldman Sachs. They moved this firm into the expanding businesses of principal investments and of proprietary trading. Endlich as well presents a convincing argument to demonstrate that Rubin and

Friedman were capable in managing risky situations. Both men well handled the Robert Maxwell fiasco and other unfortunate investment situations.

In the last chapter, Endlich discusses the problem between 1995 and 1999 of Goldman Sachs becoming a public company. She explains that as a result of declining profits in 1994 and 1995, Goldman Sachs, then under the leadership of Jon Corzine and Hank Paulson, was required to implement significant changes; both men between 1994 and 1996 succeeded in reducing costs in many of the firm's departments and developed effective systems to control investment risks. They also revamped the firm's executive committee and took action to transform Goldman Sachs into a limited liability partnership. Moreover, its partners in 1996 rejected the executive committee's proposal concerning the firm's going public; however, this proposal would be studied carefully during the next two years. Endlich correctly argues that mergers between several major Wall Street firms between 1995 and 1997 forced leaders at Goldman Sachs in 1998 to reconsider the issue of a public offering. After heated debate in the summer of that year, the majority of partners within the firm voted in favor of selling stock to the public. In 1999 Goldman Sachs ended its long legacy of being a private partnership and became a public corporation.

This fine study has much to recommend it. The book is gracefully written and carefully crafted; it is well organized and contains an extensive bibliography. Endlich's thesis concerning the firm's cooperative management culture is consistently developed throughout her book. The author as well explains the achievements and importance of the many eminent Jewish financiers who provided Goldman Sachs with leadership. However, the book falls short in several respects. A strong conclusion would have greatly enhanced this study. In that chapter, the author could have compared the accomplishments of leaders from Goldman Sachs with the contributions of leaders from rivaling Wall Street firms during the past one hundred thirty years. Furthermore, an appendix which listed the revenues of major departments at Goldman Sachs and those at other leading Wall Street investment firms would have been most helpful to readers. Nevertheless, these are minor criticisms about the best institutional history to be written about Goldman Sachs.

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College in Pennsylvania and has coedited with Dennis P. Hupchick Hungary's Historical Legacies: Studies in Honor of Steven Bela Vardy. Weisberger is also working on a book about European and American freemasonry.

Naomi W. Cohen, *Jacob H. Schiff: A Study in American Jewish Leadership* (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press and University Press of New England, 1999), xiv + 320 pp.

Naomi W. Cohen has published numerous distinguished books on the American Jewish experience. Her latest volume, a welcome and thoroughly researched study of the preeminent Jewish banker Jacob H. Schiff, draws together threads from many of her previous volumes, which include well-regarded works on American Jewish responses to Zionism and efforts for religious equality with Christians, the German Jewish experience in the United States, the American Jewish Committee, and a biography of Schiff's close friend Oscar S. Straus, the first American Jew to hold a cabinet position.

A new look at Schiff is decidedly overdue. Now—as Cohen reminds us—almost forgotten, even among American Jews, in his time he was the most eminent Jewish layman in the United States, from whom his coreligionists almost automatically expected leadership and assistance. A somewhat hagiographical family-sponsored *Life and Letters*, written by his close associate Cyrus Adler, appeared in 1930. He features prominently in assorted articles and books by Gary Dean Best, Zosa Szajkowski, and Cohen herself on American Jewish leaders and European issues, by Evyatar Friesel on his involvement with Zionism, by myself on Kuhn, Loeb and Company international activities, and by Stephen Birmingham on New York's leading Jewish families. None of these works, however, gives more than a partial picture of Schiff. Cohen's new volume, which does not claim to be a full biography, concentrates on Schiff's role as a Jewish leader. Even so, she provides a useful summary of his life and business career which, given the (probably deliberate) weeding from Schiff's and his partners' papers of substantial materials relating to Kuhn, Loeb and Company's business dealings, may well represent the fullest biographical treatment he is likely to receive.

Schiff's position among American Jews derived in part—but only in part—from the wealth which he accrued from a successful career in business. Born at Frankfurt-am-Main in 1847, the son of a successful Jewish banking family with ties to the Rothschilds, at the age of seventeen Schiff immigrated to the United States. Apart from eighteen months or so in the early 1870s, when he briefly took a position with the Warburg banking firm in Hamburg, Schiff spent the rest of his life in the United States, quickly becoming an American

citizen. After marrying into the small but respected New York banking house, Kuhn, Loeb and Company in 1875, Schiff built it up into the country's second most prominent investment bank, surpassed only by J. P. Morgan & Company. Schiff himself became one of New York's leading financiers, respected both for his financial acumen and his somewhat rigid, even puritanical character. Kuhn, Loeb's ability to utilize Schiff's European connections to raise extensive funds overseas, and his close alliance with railroad tycoon W. H. Harriman, who rescued the Union Pacific and made it one of the country's leading railway lines, were both important assets to the firm's success.

A workaholic, Schiff effectively led a double life. From early in his career his enormous energies were directed not just to promoting his business, but to anything bearing upon the American and international Jewish communities. Schiff took seriously the strong Frankfurt Jewish tradition in which he had been educated, an outlook which mandated tithing oneself for charity and demanded that the wealthy undertake extensive philanthropic activities. His upbringing neatly accorded with the contemporaneous American "gospel of wealth," which held that the rich had a charitable obligation to the society to which they belonged. From the 1880s until his death in 1920, Schiff's presence and financial support was a virtual *sine qua non* for any American Jewish institution. Cohen provides a comprehensive survey of the vast range of Schiff's activities, by no means all of which were narrowly Jewish; he was, for example, a generous backer of Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute and wrote to President Woodrow Wilson demanding the removal of the color bar in federal government appointments. His efforts to assist fellow Jews ranged from isolated acts of personal charity through long-term support for, and detailed involvement with, such institutions as the Montefiore Home for Incurables and the Henry Street Settlement in New York, to Schiff's endeavors to pressure and even undermine the anti-Semitic tsarist Russian government by utilizing his firm's financial might to deny it loans and by lobbying successive American presidential administrations to demand equal rights for Russian Jews and abrogate a longstanding Russian-American commercial treaty. Schiff was tireless in demanding equal treatment for American Jews and in combating anti-Semitism, be it in the law courts, the universities, or the allocation of government jobs.

Cohen delineates Schiff's ambivalent attitude toward the

increasingly strong demands of American and international Zionists for a Jewish national home in Palestine and his gradual conversion to "cultural Zionism," the establishment of a center of consciously Jewish life. To some degree Schiff's acquiescence in this cause reflected his and other American Jewish leaders' realization that the popularity of Zionism among the increasingly numerous American Jewish masses was such that continuing opposition might cause their own rejection and the loss of authority. Another reason, however, was Schiff's own fear that Jews in the United States and other Western countries had become so fully integrated into their host societies that they were in danger of forgetting their own cultural and religious roots. Schiff himself consistently stressed his dual pride in being both an American and an observant Jew, but even within his own family his children and still more his grandchildren lacked his deep understanding and attachment to Jewish faith and ritual. In practice, the integration into American life which Schiff persistently sought for American Jews often led to a dilution of Judaism and ultimately to assimilation.

One theme of Cohen's study is the role of Schiff and his fellow Jewish leaders as "stewards," self-appointed, enlightened despots who attempted to set policy for the entire American Jewish community. A strong element of benevolent paternalism undoubtedly characterized Schiff's leadership, and in most cases the implicit reward for his substantial contributions of both time and money to some cause was his near automatic appointment to a prominent position therein. Cohen rightly points to the element of social control in the efforts of American Jewish leaders of predominantly German origin to "Americanize" the two million Jewish emigrants from Eastern Europe and Russia who poured into the United States between 1880 and 1914. Alarmed by the clustering of Jewish immigration in ghettos in New York and other cities of the United States East Coast, Schiff himself attempted, with limited success, to disperse Jewish settlement into the South and West. Even so, Schiff's personal qualities, especially his readiness to take a detailed and sympathetic personal interest in individuals and small-scale philanthropies and to support all Jewish endeavors, effectively mediated the resentments which such undertakings might otherwise have provoked. His underlying humanitarian emphasis was probably another reason why Jewish immigrants of the Lower East Side fondly referred to him as "unser Yankele" (our little Jacob). Schiff consistently opposed legislation

intended to reduce Jewish immigration to the United States. A moderate who believed that “responsible” trade unions had an important social role, on occasion he supported strikes, particularly among the overwhelmingly Jewish employees of the New York garment trade, and demanded that employers treat their workers fairly and humanely, views which led him to endorse child labor legislation and government regulation of working conditions. And, however elitist, Schiff was sufficiently shrewd and flexible to yield ultimately to pressure on Zionism and other issues, acceding in 1906 to demands to establish an American Jewish Committee to protest against tsarist oppression of East European Jews and in 1908 to the establishment of a *kehillah*, or united Jewish organization, for New York City. Through such concessions, Schiff and other established Jewish leaders cannily ensured themselves continuing influence within broad American Jewish councils, even as they acquiesced in greater democracy.

The one aspect of Schiff’s career which Cohen perhaps underplays is his international role. She rightly points out that his ability to mobilize international capital to finance American security issues was crucial to his business success, and this also draws attention to Schiff’s close links with such overseas Jewish leaders as Paul Nathan, Lucien Wolf, the Rothschilds, Max M. Warburg, and Baron de Hirsch. She perhaps does not stress sufficiently the weight which, by the late nineteenth century, the relatively recent Jewish presence in the United States carried in international Jewish deliberations and the manner in which this developing American influence paralleled the broader trajectory of the conscious growth of United States power around the turn of the century. Schiff’s key role in providing finance to Japan during the Russo-Japanese War while denying such funds to Russia—a policy which he could not always persuade European Jewish financiers, let alone American gentile bankers, to emulate—was a startling demonstration of both his country’s growing economic strength and of Schiff’s readiness to utilize his influence to defend Jews elsewhere. One can plausibly argue that the early development of an anti-Russian American Jewish lobby on international issues anticipated the tactics which late—twentieth-century African Americans would employ when persuading their government to move against South Africa’s racial policies.

More information placing Schiff’s international posture in the

broad context of other contemporary American and European businessmen's attitude toward the outside world would have been useful. Cohen mentions Schiff's general pre-1914 support for international peace but not his endorsement of the 1912–14 attempt of three fellow European Jewish businessmen, Hamburg banker Max M. Warburg, shipping magnate Albert Ballin, and his close British friend Sir Ernest Cassel, to facilitate an Anglo-German entente. As historians David S. Patterson and C. Roland Marchand have demonstrated, the prewar international peace movement was a cause broadly popular with moderately enlightened American businessmen. Cohen briefly mentions Schiff's wartime support for American financing of European reconstruction but not the degree to which other leading American bankers shared his view. She also ignores Schiff's—and other Kuhn, Loeb partners'—early funding in 1919 and 1920 of the infant Council on Foreign Relations. She might, too, have perhaps slightly expanded her treatment of Schiff's postwar sponsorship of anti-Bolshevik activities in Russia.

Such minor quibbles should not, however, detract from Cohen's accomplishment in producing an excellent and much-needed study of one particular Jewish leader. Schiff's position in American Jewry was, as she points out, *sui generis*, the product of a particular time and place as well as his own personal qualities. The growth of professionally managed institutions which characterized the progressive period in general, as well as the increasing numbers and diversity of the American Jewish population, made it impossible for any successor to replace Schiff or even aspire to his multifaceted involvement in American Jewish affairs. Cohen does full justice to Schiff as a man of conscience, a complex, individualistic, sometimes domineering but fundamentally generous, humane, and enlightened American Jewish leader.

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SHORT BOOK REVIEWS

Compiled by Robert Miller.

Naama Sabar, *Kibbutzniks in the Diaspora* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 150 pp.

More than thirty years before the creation of the state of Israel the first kibbutz communities were formed. The great majority of these mostly rural, agricultural cooperatives based their social structures and values on socialist Zionism. Communal values took precedence over the individual. Naama Sabar, an education professor from Tel Aviv, explores the reasons and circumstances that drove people to emigrate from kibbutzim to America. In some respects the decision to move reflects a younger generation's attitudes. Those born into kibbutzim were not necessarily wedded to its ideology. Sabar relies heavily on the extensive interviews she conducted of young kibbutz-born Israelis living in Los Angeles in the 1980s and early 1990s. These life histories also suggest some of the factors that cause kibbutzniks to remain in America. The underlying theme that runs through this short book is the emigrants' search for identity as they try to adjust to the openness of American society.

Alfred A. Goren, *The Politics and Public Culture of American Jews (The Modern Jewish Experience, Paula Hyman and Deborah Dash Moore, series editors)* (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1999), 223 pp.

How have American Jews been able to maintain their sense of community and a specifically Jewish culture while acculturating into the American mainstream? This is the central question that permeates ten essays by Columbia University Professor Arthur A. Goren. The challenge facing the four generations of American Jews in the twentieth century, according to the author, has been finding a way to live "harmoniously in two cultures," one Jewish and one American.

The essays are divided chronologically into two sections. The six essays in Part I, which covers the period from 1900 to 1940, examine some of the strategies used by Jewish immigrants to help remind them of their distinctiveness as a group. One of the early essays looks at the way funerals of prominent Jewish leaders and commemorations of historic events—such as the 250th anniversary of the arrival of the first Jewish settlers in North America—served as civic rituals of affirmation and self-definition. Along with these expressions of public culture, Goren also focuses on the politics of American Jews. Part II, which

covers the period since 1940, highlights the diverse interests exhibited by American Jews. They fought against all sorts of religious, ethnic, and racial prejudice at home. At the same time, Zionists mobilized support for the creation of a Jewish state in the making.

This collection of previously published essays reflects the author's abiding interest in the changing patterns of American Jewish communal life and culture in the twentieth century.

Compiled by Christine Crandall.

Doreen Berger, ed., *The Jewish Victorian: Genealogical Information from the Jewish Newspapers, 1871–1880* (Witney, Oxfordshire: Robert Boyd Publications, 1999), 592 pp.

The Jewish Victorian is a great place to gain insight on Jewish societal life in the late nineteenth century. The book mainly consists of excerpts from the *Jewish Chronicle*, *Jewish Record*, or *Jewish World*, most of which tell of births, deaths, marriages, and community events. By reading about these events, life in Anglo-Jewish circles and how each related to the other become more understandable. These small articles may provide information omitted from standard newspaper sources. For instance, a list of visiting out-of-town maternal relatives would often be published in these local papers. This is an incredibly valuable resource to genealogists. The only thing lacking is a brief explanation of Anglo-Jewish society in the late nineteenth century. Some background knowledge of this time is needed for the information to be more widely relevant. However, the book is arranged intelligently with surnames listed alphabetically. Any cross references between names can be found in the complete index. The book itself is of a durable paperback, making it lightweight enough to carry as a reference book while conducting research. With the proper background information, this book can be an invaluable resource, although simply leafing through it and reading the vignettes of these people's lives is also entertainment in itself.

Andrew Simons and The Greater New Orleans Archivists, *Jews of New Orleans: An Archival Guide* (New Orleans: The Greater New Orleans Archivists, 1998), 239 pp.

This book is extremely useful to genealogists and researchers as a starting place for their research. The first twenty pages explore the history of the most prominent Jews of New Orleans. The remainder of the book lists local and national repositories which could be of use when researching New Orleans. In addition to the list, some brief

descriptions of the most pertinent collections are also given, as well as contact information. *Jews of New Orleans* contains a coherent table of contents and index, which combined with the alphabetical repository listing, makes the book user friendly. Being in paperback format, the book may not last too long with heavy usage, but altogether this is a practical guide for researchers beginning their investigation.

Louis and Henry Fraenkel, *Genealogical Tables of Jewish Families, 14th–20th Centuries: Forgotten Fragments of the History of the Fraenkel Family, Vol. I & II* (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1999), Vol. I, 189 pp. in addition to Vol. II's tables.

Genealogical Tables of Jewish Families is a wondrous resource for anyone conducting genealogical research on Jewish families. These books are easy to read and the stories are captivating. Within the pages of Volume I are beautiful illustrations of the people and places mentioned in the text. The Fraenkels' book goes beyond mere names and dates of Jewish families to include stories which convey the emotions and events of everyday life. This brings all of the names to life, giving them real personalities. Fraenkel does not forget to include pertinent background information on the state of Europe throughout this period. These history lessons are intermeshed with letters and stories to create a smooth narrative. By including these tales, the books create a real empathy with the past. Volume II consists of charts and tables as one would expect of a genealogical study. Over eleven thousand names are listed, making this book invaluable to those searching for any information in the aftermath of the Holocaust. There is a biographical glossary in the back of Volume I which, along with the index of names and table of contents, makes these books easy to navigate. There is even a small Danish and Hebrew glossary to make the letters included more understandable. In addition to the information contained, the volumes are handsomely produced. Placed within a holder and printed on acid-free paper, they will last a lifetime.