

Eric Caplan, *From Ideology to Liturgy: Reconstructionist Worship and American Liberal Judaism* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2002), 413 pp.

Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of the Reconstructionist Movement, had generated a series of liturgical texts, beginning in the 1940s, to promulgate his theology. The publication of the first movement-generated Reconstructionist prayer books, the various volumes of *Kol Haneshamah* issued between 1989 and 1999, marks the maturation of the movement and its negotiation between Kaplan's theology and the needs of a new generation. Eric Caplan's *From Ideology to Liturgy* compares these two sets of liturgies and in the process presents the first detailed study ever of Reconstructionist liturgy. In doing so, he provides chapter-length surveys of Kaplan's ideology, the institutional history of Reconstructionist Judaism, and the ideology/ies of post-Kaplan Reconstructionism. He also situates these liturgies within the broader picture of liberal Jewish ritual.

As Caplan's book and chapter titles indicate, his interest is in the ideological statements made by the various liturgies. The opening paragraph of his introduction explains this emphasis, citing Lawrence Hoffman:

... liturgy is a primary vehicle for the articulation of the community's sense of self. A prayerbook is embraced if the ideological message contained within it mirrors people's self-understanding and religious inclinations. To be adopted, it need not be a perfect reflection of group identity, but it must be perceived as the best translation currently available. Through repeated use, the book's message acts as a socializing agent to heighten the ideal image it represents. (1)

Caplan proceeds to organize each of his discussions primarily by ideological categories. Thus, his discussion of Kaplan's own liturgies lists his changes to the received traditional prayer book under the categories of revelation, messianism, physical resurrection after death, Temple/sacrifices, reward and punishment, Jewish chosenness/invidious comparisons to other nations, unedifying text, miracles/supernaturalism, aesthetics and repetition/economy [of language], and holiday Bible readings. Following this comes a discussion of Kaplan's

supplementary material organized as meditations, editorial notes, interpretative versions, and supplementary readings. He includes also a brief discussion of Kaplan's suggestions about the technical aspects of a synagogue service. Many of the sublists are themselves long enough that Caplan has numbered the entries.

Caplan's discussion of the *Kol Haneshamah* series follows a similar list format, omitting the terms underlined above (Caplan's efficient if inelegant method of indicating changes to Hebrew text throughout the book), and adding to the types of liturgical changes: feminism, Zionism/Holocaust, and Sephardi influence; and to the types of supplemental material: guided meditations, lay education/empowerment, layout, commentary, and readings (both subdivided into their ideological categories). Most of these new categories (and other subcategories) respond to the changed reality of the late twentieth century. Because, within each category, Caplan compares the two liturgies, his discussion of *Kol Haneshamah* duplicates much of his discussion of Kaplan's own text.

Caplan also compares the Reconstructionist treatment of these various categories to their appearance in other liberal liturgies. Thus, at the end of the chapter on Kaplan's liturgies and in the chapter following his analysis of *Kol Haneshamah*, much of the list appears yet again.

This strategy generates an exhaustive catalogue of all the various ideological statements propounded by Reconstructionist liturgies and a comparison between the Reconstructionist statements and those of the Reform, Conservative, and (for *Kol Haneshamah*) the Jewish Renewal movements. While this creates a valuable reference book, it makes for neither good reading nor for deep analysis. Only in his brief postscript does Caplan begin to discuss some theoretical positions that might have helped him to organize his mass of data in a more illuminating fashion. It might have been more effective to have placed this discussion of ideology explicitly within a discussion of the struggles to understand the interface between Jewish and American civilizations (or cultures). Then he could have compared this with the struggles of other American religious communities to understand their roles within American secularizing society.

A great part of the shallowness of Caplan's analysis also derives from his choice of sources. Though his interviews with key participants in the process that generated *Kol Haneshamah* give significant insight into how they arrived at their various decisions, this results in a history based on personal recollections — which are not always accurate or complete. Caplan otherwise cites only published sources. He apparently never consulted archives for insights into what people were saying and thinking during the construction of these texts. It is highly likely that Mordecai Kaplan's personal papers include correspondence, reflections, or draft versions that would give important insights into his decisions. The same can be said for archival material from the Reconstructionist movement itself. This sort of research would have allowed Caplan to focus more on the process of producing these liturgies instead of inserting isolated tidbits only as they are relevant to individual ideological topics. As it is clear from his "TIDBITS" that there were significant controversies within the committees producing *Kol Haneshamah*, such a wider view would have been welcome. Because he did not use archival material, Caplan constantly and unnecessarily speculates about people's motives.

Another significant lacuna in this tome is its deep reliance on the prayer books themselves. While liturgical scholars have little recourse when dealing with earlier periods, scholars of contemporary liturgy need to pay attention to the performative aspects of rituals. Liturgies are not words on a page; rather, the words on the page are guides to the performed prayers. Caplan gives only an occasional nod to what congregations actually do or did with these prayer books. Did these liturgies succeed in shaping Jewish identity as their authors intended? How many of the supplemental readings or alternative versions ever received a hearing? While it may yet be too early to judge the impact of *Kol Haneshamah* (and it certainly was when Caplan wrote the dissertation upon which he bases this book), he might have included more analysis of the impact of Kaplan's own liturgy.

Finally, as Eric Friedland has already noted in a review for H-Judaic (<http://www.h-net.org/~judaic/>), Caplan has made many, mostly minor, errors of nuance and fact about non-Reconstructionist liturgies. These detract from the authority of the volume as a whole.

Let me add that in spite of Caplan's thanks to his editor for making his "non-poetic prose... infinitely more readable" (viii), he should banish the passive voice. Contemporary liturgies (and books about them) are not written; people write them.

Caplan presents a detailed summary of the ideological statements found in Reconstructionist prayer books. In many ways, he would have done better to broaden his research methods and write a fuller more analytical study just of Mordecai Kaplan's liturgies, their impact, and the critique of them by the editors of *Kol Haneshamah*, leaving the study of *Kol Haneshamah* itself for a later date and deeper historical perspective. Such studies of Reconstructionist (and other liberal) liturgies would contribute greatly to our understanding of contemporary Judaism. Caplan's volume unfortunately only opens the door.

---

*Ruth Langer is an associate professor of Jewish Studies in the Theology Department and the associate director at the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College.*

Dana Evan Kaplan, *American Reform Judaism: An Introduction* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 297 pp.

On the most basic level, Dana Evan Kaplan's new book has a message for anyone who hasn't stepped foot in a Reform synagogue in the past twenty years: This is not your dad's Reform Judaism! From Los Altos Hills, California, to Scarsdale, New York, from Atlanta, Georgia, to Brookline, Massachusetts, Reform synagogues have reinvented themselves and the movement as a whole. Empowered by Reform's elevation of autonomy to a grounding principle, rabbis, educators, and lay leaders have managed to combine commitments to tradition and progressivism, New Age spirituality, and Torah study to create an amalgam that would be impossible to fathom, let alone replicate, in the more traditional movements. But as Kaplan is careful to remind the reader, autonomy allows for great variation between, and even within, individual communities. It also frustrates attempts to promote unity or theological consistency.

Kaplan is an ideal guide to this new Reform Judaism. He grew up as a movement insider, who nevertheless had strong traditionalist influences in his life: a yeshiva day school education and a close relationship with tradition-minded maternal grandparents. Kaplan's early chapters competently sketch the history of Reform Judaism and the development of its belief system and statements of principles. The bulk of the book is devoted to a description of the transformation of the movement in recent years: changes in worship, the embrace of feminism, acceptance of gays and lesbians, outreach to intermarried couples, and the growth of Progressive Judaism in Israel.

The hero in the book is Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the movement's lay organization, the Union for Reform Judaism, since 1996. Kaplan gives Yoffie much of the credit for engineering the transformation, even as he allows that movement growth and ritual experimentation were well underway before his ascendancy. Using adverbs like "quickly" and "boldly" to describe Yoffie's implementation of new approaches to worship, education, and ritual Kaplan asserts that Yoffie was "the right person at the right time and place to take over the

leadership of a movement that had to either make dramatic changes or watch its fortunes fade rapidly.” (65) Yoffie is even given the last word in a four-page afterword, where he predictably compliments Kaplan on his “superb job” (259) and “compelling” (260) portrait.

Yoffie lobs one substantive criticism: Kaplan’s alarmism about a lack of theological coherence in the movement is misplaced, he argues, noting that the contentious 1999 Pittsburgh Platform, which forced Reform leaders to contend with the movement’s messy diversity, has been largely forgotten or ignored since its passage. American Jews, he reminds us, “are resolutely pragmatic and resistant to theological speculation, and always have been.” (262) In this respect, he could have added, they reflect the attitudes of Americans as a whole. Yoffie provides an insight that could have added some context and perspective to Kaplan’s treatment of the platform controversy.

But Kaplan is correct to argue that, for now, the lack of theological coherence will continue to resurface whenever the movement tries to define itself, as with the Central Conference of American Rabbis’ present effort to introduce a new prayer book. Given the transitional state of the movement, it might have been more prudent to delay the adoption of a new *siddur* until greater consensus is reached about theology and future direction. A revised edition of *Gates of Prayer* that included new service alternatives designed to respond to current worship trends, while retaining options that would appeal to more Classical Reform-oriented congregations, would have caused far less controversy while enshrining the movement’s commitment to diversity. One wonders about Kaplan’s prediction that congregations will eagerly accept the new prayer book, given the decidedly mixed reactions to earlier versions of the 1999 platform. The unenthusiastic response in many quarters to the experimental edition of the new *siddur*, which was piloted as Kaplan’s book went to press, might call this prediction into doubt.

To make too much out of Kaplan’s prognostication skills would be unfairly nit-picky. Unfortunately, the book suffers from more serious problems of intention. Kaplan’s target audience is unclear. Is he writing the book for the general public? Jewish insiders? Scholars? Kaplan’s breezy writing style makes the book engaging, and I would not hesitate

to assign it in introductory college or adult education courses. But the assumed level of knowledge (or occasional poor editing) may leave the uninitiated reader now and then frustrated. On the other hand, most of Kaplan's sources are materials that are in the general record, magazines, newspaper articles, and previously published monographs. His research is thorough and peppered with interesting tidbits, although few are likely to surprise long-time students of American Judaism.

Kaplan is at his most intriguing when he applies to his study of the Reform movement the sociological research of Dean Kelley, Rodney Stark, and Roger Finke, who examine the growth of conservative churches. As Kaplan explains, "high-cost religious demands actually strengthen a denomination... As a religious group gradually increases its demands on its members, people are sold on the idea that their participation and commitment are wanted and needed." (67) Like many mainline Protestant denominations, Reform Judaism has traditionally been a low-tension religious movement, making few demands on its members. Kaplan's insistence that Reform's future viability depends on its capacity to remake itself into a medium-tension movement, "demanding enough to command respect, but flexible enough to attract and retain a diverse and pluralistic membership," elevates his cheerleading for Yoffie and company, providing a rationale for Reform's "re'jew'vination" beyond personal taste. One wishes, however, that Kaplan had applied this argument in his chapter on education to make a more forceful argument in favor of Reform day schools. In order to exercise the autonomy that Reform prizes, knowledge is an essential prerequisite. Yet, as Hebrew Union College professor Michael Zeldin points out, the minimal number of teaching hours and inconsistent attendance records in most religious schools make it impossible to teach students "even the most rudimentary knowledge of Hebrew, an understanding of Jewish ideas, or a sense of their identities as Jews." (138) Kaplan's description of efforts to revitalize the religious school evokes the image of a doctor performing resuscitation on a terminal patient.

As for Kaplan's essentially optimistic outlook on the movement's future, one can only hope that he is correct. Kaplan repeatedly notes that according to the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey, Reform has become the largest denomination in the United States. But as with Conservative Judaism in the midtwentieth century, one gets the sense that the seemingly encouraging numbers are soft and, thus, misleading. Kaplan would have painted a more realistic picture of the state of the movement had he provided an in-depth portrait of the attitudes and practices of those who self-identify as Reform. For example, only 43 percent of Reform Jews belong to a synagogue, a membership rate far lower than their Orthodox or Conservative counterparts. Even fewer Reform Jews provide their children with eight or more years of Jewish education. Rates of synagogue attendance are also embarrassingly low, with only 18 percent of Reform synagogue members attending services, on average, at least monthly. The statistics for non-members are even more alarming, with over 75 percent attending synagogue one to two times per year, or not at all.<sup>1</sup> These numbers provide an important and mostly absent context to the transformation he describes. They also suggest benchmarks by which to judge the level of success. Unfortunately, flaws in the 2000 survey may mean that we will need to wait another decade before we see the effects, if any, of Reform's transformation on the demography.

By no means is this observation meant to minimize the profound impact of the innovations on thousands of worshippers and dozens of synagogues. (Nor does it blunt a crucial difference between the Conservative movement of the 1960s and 1970s and the Reform movement today. As Marshall Sklare observed at the time, the Conservative movement was plagued by a lack of self-confidence.<sup>2</sup> The contemporary Reform movement suffers no such malady.) Even if levels of affiliation remain flat due to hemorrhaging of the marginally affiliated and disaffected, Reform seems to have succeeded in bringing new populations into the synagogue and fashioning a more intense religious experience for active members, old-timers as well as newcomers. Stemming if not reversing the assimilationist tide would be remarkable by itself. If this phenomenon is borne out in future surveys, Reform leaders may be justified in a joyous call of "*Dayenu!*"

---

*Jonathan Krasner is an assistant professor of American Jewish History at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. He is currently revising and expanding his Ph.D. dissertation, which focuses on the representation of insiders and outsiders in American Jewish schoolbooks.*

## *Notes*

<sup>1</sup>For a full profile of the Reform movement based on the 1990 NJPS, see Bernard M. Lazerwitz and Ephraim Tabory, "A Religious and Social Profile of Reform Jews in the United States," in Dana Evan Kaplan, ed., *Contemporary Debates in American Reform Judaism: Conflicting Visions* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 19-38. As the citation suggests, Kaplan was well aware of these statistics when he wrote the book, but apparently believed that they were irrelevant to his story.

<sup>2</sup>Marshall Sklare, "The Conservative Movement: Achievements and Problems," in *Observing America's Jews* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1993), 60-64.

Egal Feldman, *Catholics and Jews in Twentieth-Century America* (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001), xvi + 326 pp.

Feldman's third major work on Christian-Jewish relations in the U.S. is a mine of information and will be useful for any student of recent developments in relations between the Catholic and Jewish communities. *Catholics and Jews in Twentieth-Century America* argues that progress in Catholic-Jewish understanding has created an honest exchange over such contentious subjects as the attitude of Pius XII to the Holocaust and the relationship between Christianity and antisemitism. Written before the publication of *Dabru Emet* and before the controversies surrounding the works of James Carroll, John Cornwell, David Kertzer, and Gary Wills, the book summarizes key aspects of existing historical research on the subject and provides much new material — albeit nothing from the archives — on the current state of Jewish-Catholic debate.

The first half of the book gives a chronological account of the major events in Jewish-Catholic relations, from the Dreyfus affair to the Second Vatican Council, describing the success of American bishops in overcoming two thousand years of the “theology of contempt.” In the second half of the book, Feldman turns to the religious questions that dominate Catholic-Jewish dialogues today — the nature of Catholic antisemitism, the nature and objectives of the dialogue, the Catholic rediscovery of living Judaism, and the significance of the Holocaust, Zionism, and the State of Israel. Feldman draws extensively on material from Catholic journals and adds useful introductions to the motivations and biographies of figures not usually given the attention they deserve. He has also included a highly informative presentation of trends in Catholic missions to Jews and makes a distinctive contribution in examining the significance attributed to history in treatments of Jewish-Christian relations today.

Because he focuses on events at an international level, however, the examination of Jewish-Catholic encounters in the U.S. is less than thorough. There are no references to Louisiana, Texas, California, or New Mexico, where Jews and Protestants formed alliances in the face

of pre-existing Catholic settlements, nor to the Bible Belt, where Jews and Catholics alike lived at the margins of overwhelmingly Protestant societies. The book similarly lacks reference to developments in Jewish-Latino relations, there is only one footnote on Polish Catholics, no reference to black Catholics; and nothing on the impact of inter-ethnic politics on the Church in America. We learn virtually nothing of the unique political relationships that Jews and Catholics developed on the national level, particularly in New York, both in trade union and left-wing or liberal politics early in the century and later in sustaining support for the State of Israel in Congress. Instead, we are left with the impression that the political dimension of Catholic-Jewish relations was primarily a function of disagreements over the international threats posed by Communism and Nazism or Fascism and ideological opposition within the Church to Zionism. The book also overlooks distinctive Catholic-Jewish relationships in other major cities such as New Orleans, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Chicago, while the treatment of Catholic antisemitism in Baltimore appears with only the vaguest reference to the impact of one factor: Irish and German working-class prejudice. Without a broader social and political analysis going beyond a common stance against the Klan, it is difficult to understand the development of solidarity between Jewish and Catholic representative organizations and the development of the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ), phenomena driven by the insistent solidarity of many Jews and Catholic figures at the local level.

The many strengths of Feldman's treatment of theological questions faced in Catholic-Jewish dialogue are also counterbalanced by a few oversights. The shift of American Catholics from an apparently "anti-Jewish" stance before 1945 to increasing acceptance of the strengths of Judaism after 1960 is given remarkably little explanation. There is no reference to the struggles over "indifferentism," which meant many Catholics felt unable to participate in dialogue with Jews before Vatican II. Nor does the subsequent narrative treat the influence of Cardinal Ratzinger, of the Paulists, or of Catholic universities and seminaries. On the Jewish side, there is no examination of the impact of interdenominational politics within America on international dialogue with the Vatican and little discussion of differing Orthodox

responses to interfaith encounters, on the local level or amongst religious leaders.

At a number of points the narrative is strongly influenced by interpretations which appear unnecessarily partial, and this is aggravated into an impassioned polemic by a tendency to speculate and to generalize without supporting evidence. On key issues the assumptions underlying the narrative are not confronted with Catholic perspectives. A prime example is the suggestion that the “teaching of contempt” is not simply an error but an integral feature of Christian theology. Favourable treatment is therefore given to the minority of Catholic theologians who advance similar arguments or who believe that Christians must grapple with Auschwitz as a special theological category. Many in the Church would not accept the claim that “The Catholic Church admitted that its theology had engendered contempt for the Jew,” (227) a suggestion which Feldman advances in order to underline that the Church has completely repudiated supersessionism, but which is nevertheless a simplification. By contrast, Feldman gives short shrift to one theologian who believes that strengthening Christianity would distance Christians from antisemitism, and the book does not engage with those leading American Catholics who believe Pius XII’s silence was justifiable. A potted history of Zionism underscores the impression that this is a frankly partial account, with no mention of the Intifada or of American responses to the onset of the peace process, and without justification for dismissive remarks about King Hussein of Jordan and the very notion of “Palestinian refugees.” (214-16) Without detailed archival evidence, it is also hard to know whether and how far the “theology of contempt” prevented Catholics from countenancing support for Jewish rights. (e.g., 47)

Feldman has an eye for an important subject, and until there is further archival study covering the century, this book will remain the most useful overview of the subject in print.

---

*George R. Wilkes is a fellow of St. Edmund’s College and lectures there for the Theological Federation/Divinity Faculty. He is currently writing a history of Jewish-Christian relations in the twentieth century.*

Christopher M. Sterba, *Good Americans: Italian and Jewish Immigrants during the First World War* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 271 pp.

Italians and Jews were among the largest ethnic groups to arrive in the United States with the so-called second immigrant wave between the late 1870s and the early 1910s. By drawing extensively on newspaper accounts as well as regimental histories, war diaries, and other autobiographical sources, Christopher M. Sterba examines the response of New Haven's Italian Americans and New York City's Jewish Americans to World War I. He also addresses the impact of the conflict on the newcomers' lives to analyze the assimilation of those two minorities within their adoptive country. Unlike previous comparative research into Jews and Italians, which has focused on single cities,<sup>1</sup> he studies each community in a separate environment. This is a valuable approach to cast light on the interaction between the single minorities and the broader U.S. society, although it prevents *Good Americans* from focusing on Jewish-Italian relations. Still, the volume deals with an issue that scholarship has generally overlooked.

Sterba maintains that Italians and Jews shared similar prewar experiences. As latecomers to the United States in terms of succession of immigrant tides, they faced widespread bigotry, discrimination, and prejudice in America. Religious beliefs were an additional source of intolerance as Jews and the mostly Catholic Italians faced a prevailing Protestant environment. Moreover, neither minority enjoyed much ethnic cohesiveness. Due to the belated achievement of political unification in their native country, Italian newcomers retained localistic allegiances and tended to identify themselves less with their fatherland than with their ancestral region, province, or even village. Likewise, the children of the Jewish immigrants who came from Germany in the late 1840s and early 1850s usually distanced themselves from their fellow ethnics of East European descent.

According to Sterba, the outbreak of World War I and especially the entry of the United States into the conflict marked a major disruption in Italians' and Jews' somehow parallel histories. As their adoptive country sided with their motherland against the German and Austro-Hungarian empires, most of New Haven's Italian Americans

supported the U.S. war efforts enthusiastically. Conversely, socialistic feelings and hate of the Russian Empire, which many Jews had left to escape from tsarist pogroms and antisemitic abuse, initially made a significant number of New Yorkers from a Jewish background lukewarm toward American intervention in the conflict. While several Jews joined the ranks of the Seventy-seventh Division of the U.S. Army, their fellow ethnics were the backbone of the antiwar movement and opposition to the draft campaign within the People's Council for Democracy and Peace and other pacifist organizations. Nevertheless, the subsequent fall of the tsarist regime and, most of all, the Balfour Declaration on Palestine strengthened Jews' commitment to American participation and victory in the war both on the home front and in the battlefield.

However, in Sterba's view, Italians' and Jews' loyalty to their adoptive land at wartime did not mean the demise of the ethnic identity of these minorities. Scholars have pointed to the army as a means of nation building in Europe and have stressed that World War I was the climax of the nativist call for one hundred percent Americanism in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Sterba acknowledges that military service contributed, for instance, to improving the English-language skills of the theretofore Yiddish- or Italian-speaking soldiers. Yet, contrary to those interpretations and following more recent scholarship,<sup>3</sup> he also holds that the army tried to accommodate religious and national diversities and that the war experience strengthened the ethnic consciousness of Italian Americans and Jewish Americans. Proud of their contribution to the American victory, both communities felt empowered and entitled to voice their ethnic concerns after the end of the conflict. As a result, Italian Americans protested against President Woodrow Wilson's neglect of Italy's claims at the peace conference in Versailles, and Jewish Americans came out against an outburst of antisemitism in postwar Eastern Europe. Sterba shows that rather than severing immigrants' ties to their ancestral roots, World War I turned the newcomers and their offspring into more cohesive ethnic minorities that superseded intergroup divisions along lines of regional origins.

While Sterba's arguments are convincing, his evidence is sometimes inferential and circumstantial. (117, 190) His narrative is always fascinating, although it occasionally indulges in eye-catching, unlikely sentences. For instance, one may reasonably doubt that Chinese was spoken in such a "Tower of Babel" as the U.S. Army in 1917, (116) because Chinese immigration to the United States had been barred since 1882. Even more troubling is Sterba's little grasp of European history. For example, he repeatedly refers to prewar Italy as a "Republic," (32, 47, 151) while this country was a kingdom until June 1946. It is almost unbelievable that this blatant mistake survived the editing of a reputable publisher such as Oxford University Press.

Sterba's research is particularly revealing of the feelings of rank-and-file soldiers of Jewish and Italian extractions in the U.S. Army. His touching pages about conscripts' everyday life during training and fighting in France can appeal to nonacademicians, too. Still, scholars might wonder to what extent the Italian experience in New Haven was representative of the attitude of this ethnic group nationwide. For instance, if Sterba had looked at Italians in New York City or elsewhere as well, he would have found a significant number of Italian Americans who opposed the war and were members of the Socialist Party.<sup>4</sup> It therefore remains for future scholars to place his findings in a larger perspective and to determine whether his case studies of New Haven and New York City were the rule or the exception for Italians and Jews.

---

*Stefano Luconi teaches North American History at the University of Florence, Italy. He is the author of From Paesani to White Ethnics: The Italian Experience in Philadelphia, published by SUNY Press in 2001.*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Kessner, *The Golden Door: Italian and Jewish Immigrant Mobility in New York City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); Judith E. Smith, *Family Connections: A History of Italian and Jewish Immigrant Lives in Providence, Rhode Island, 1900-1940* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985); Kathie Friedman-Kasaba, *Memories of Migration: Gender, Ethnicity, and Work in the Lives of Jewish and Italian Women in New York, 1870-1994* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996); Rose Laub Coser, Laura S. Anker, and Andrew J. Perrin, *Women of Courage: Jewish and Italian Immigrant Women in New York* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1999).

<sup>2</sup>Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1977); Paolo Macri, *La società contemporanea* (Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino, 1992), 340; James O. Olson, *The Ethnic Dimension in American History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 177-78.

<sup>3</sup>Nancy Gentile Ford, *Americans All! Foreign-born Soldiers in World War I* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001).

<sup>4</sup>Elisabetta Vezzosi, *Il socialismo indifferente: Immigrati italiani e Socialist Party negli Stati Uniti del primo Novecento* (Rome, Italy: Edizioni Lavoro, 1991), 166-72, 175-77, 183-84.

Joseph W. Bendersky, *The "Jewish Threat:" Anti-Semitic Politics of the U.S. Army* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 538 pp.

Perhaps one of the most famous postwar quotations of General George S. Patton was his derogatory reference to Jewish Displaced Persons as being sub-human.<sup>1</sup> Statements such as this were often cited as aberrations; in addition to being one of the U.S. Army's most successful field commanders, Patton was also known for his tactless behavior. Yet, in a well-written and densely noted text, Bendersky reveals that attitudes such as Patton's were common among officers in the United States Army during much of the twentieth century.

Bendersky begins his analysis with a synthesis of the world view of U.S. Army officers, demonstrating how they accepted the Social Darwinism prevalent among much of the educated upper classes at the dawn of the twentieth century. Such a revelation should not be too surprising. Military officers tended to come from upper-class families, in the U.S. and Europe, and it was these classes that tended to accept and promote social Darwinism and the pseudo-scientific concepts of race. In addition, many army officers were Southerners, where Jim Crow laws reinforced common racial assumptions.

Bendersky then develops a sophisticated analysis of the impact of World War I upon the thinking of the select group of officers in army military intelligence. It was this group, which to Bendersky was the core of the army intelligentsia, who would advise on policy formulation, that not only accepted the most grotesque antisemitic notions, but then adapted these ideas to the American scene. Of particular interest is Bendersky's analysis of the post 1919 "Red Scare," in which military intelligence officers linked subversion to "foreign elements" within the urban landscape (i.e., Jews) and then claimed that all unrest was part of a Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy to undermine the American way of life. Army military intelligence went one step further and even formulated plans for the suppression of urban anarchy through military intervention.

During the 1920s many of these officers, both on active duty and retired, engaged in covert surveillance of various Jewish organizations, such as the Joint Distribution Committee, the American Jewish

Committee, and various relief organizations, in contravention of the law. The levels of paranoia about a Jewish conspiracy were fueled by the publication of that most famous forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which an army intelligence officer obtained prior to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. The publication of an American edition by Henry Ford in 1920 merely added to the developing sense of panic. The superficial relationship between *Protocols* and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the association of American Jews with liberal causes, and the racial assumptions of the U.S. Army officer corps provided all the proof some would need that America was under assault. Some officers continued to use the *Protocols* as a guide even after it was unmasked as a forgery.

Ironically, Bendersky is able to reconstruct the mindset of these antisemitic officers, along with their plans and various paranoias, through their own detailed and meticulously categorized correspondence. Obviously these men did not feel that their efforts were in any way a threat to American democracy. Rather they regarded alien Jews as the threat, justifying any actions taken to prevent their insidious infiltration of the U.S. as part of their responsibility to national security.

How widespread were these ideas and related activities? Although Bendersky does not provide a quantitative breakdown on the entire officer corps, he does make a convincing argument that such beliefs were pervasive among the elite officers who served in military intelligence, consulate attachés, and those who had access to the highest echelons of the government. Almost all of these men had one thing in common; they were graduates of the U.S. Army War College. As such, his chapter on officer education at the U.S. Army War College makes chilling reading. Bendersky not only dissects the curriculum, but even the student exams and notebooks. He then follows the careers of some of the teachers and students.

The most profound impact of these antisemitic offices came during the 1930s and into the stormy days before Pearl Harbor. Although many of these men were critical of Nazism – and it needs to be noted that few officers were fans of the Nazis – they nevertheless did not have much sympathy for persecuted Jews or for many of the victims

of German aggression. Indeed, some military attachés hoped for a war between Hitler and Stalin. Fundamentally, the chapters on the 1930s and after reveal that the attitudes of much of the officer corps remained unchanged since 1919. Thus thousands of Jewish refugees found their requests for asylum blocked or stalled by the U.S. military attachés' fear of communist spies, or at least the dilution of the American melting pot by inferior races.

Bendersky's analysis of the army officer corps through World War II and into the postwar era makes it clear that Patton's comment about Jews was not an isolated event. Their antisemitic ideas colored how they regarded the survivors of the Holocaust and their subsequent treatment of the remnant of European Jewry. Certainly the advent of a truly mass army, which included a number of Jews, tended to blunt the more public manifestations of such racist ideas, yet they did not erase them.

Most studies of institutional or intellectual bigotry in the U.S. military focus on the treatment of African Americans.<sup>2</sup> Bendersky's book adds an important dimension to our understanding of racial prejudice in the U.S. military. During a time of fundamental transformation in American politics and society, the U.S. Army remained one of the bastions of antiquated notions about race.

---

*Frederic Krome is the managing editor of the American Jewish Archives Journal and an adjunct professor of history and Judaic Studies at the University of Cincinnati.*

## *Notes*

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Leonard Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

<sup>2</sup>For example, see James Westheider, *Fighting on Two Fronts: African Americans and the Vietnam War* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

Robert Perlman, *From Shtetl to Milltown: Litvaks, Hungarians, and Galizianers in Western Pennsylvania, 1875-1925* (Pittsburgh: Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, 2001), xii + 123 pp. Illus.

Robert Perlman has carved out his own niche in the writing of American Jewish history – he is the expert on Hungarian Jews in the United States. He has followed his book, *Bridging Three Worlds: Hungarian Jewish Americans, 1848-1914* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991) with the present volume.

McKeesport, Pennsylvania, is the milltown of the title. It has always been viewed as a Hungarian Jewish enclave by the Jews of Western Pennsylvania. There are jokes about how Hungarian Jews pronounce the town's name, with the accent on the first syllable, as in Hungarian. Perlman's subtitle adds Litvaks and Galizianers to the mélange of Jewish residents (omitting an important element – Jews from Ukraine are usually called "Russian" Jews) but the main actors are Hungarians.

Perlman has organized his book chronologically and by theme. The first two chapters deal with the origins of Jews in the milltowns of Western Pennsylvania, excluding the cities of Pittsburgh and Johnstown. That is because "the story of Jewish immigrants in [the latter city]... has been carefully researched by Ewa Morawaska." (xi) As for Pittsburgh, the history of its Jews "has been written..." (ibid.) In fact, there is no scholarly history of the Jews of Pittsburgh as yet, only two oral histories and some theses and articles.

The other milltowns Perlman investigated are Ambridge and Donora, with occasional references to other places. In researching the origins of his subjects, Perlman traveled to Hungary, Slovakia, and Ukraine to look at synagogue and census records. "This proved futile..." (xii) but he was able to use U.S. census records and listed them in his appendix.

Succeeding chapters deal with life and work in America. Perlman asks why these Jews settled in small towns rather than the big cities where the majority of Jewish immigrants made their homes. His response is that "Without doubt... the most compelling explanation of why people chose to go to a particular town was the fact that they

knew someone who was already there. There are myriad instances of this pattern of ‘chain migration’...”(34)

In one table, Perlman shows that the 1910-20 occupations of Jews in four Western Pennsylvania towns differ drastically from those of non-Jews. Most were self-employed in trade, a smaller percentage were commercial employees and professionals, and only a small percentage were employed in manufacturing. Non-Jews were overwhelmingly engaged in manufacturing. It is obvious that even in McKeesport, where a larger percentage of Jews were employed in the mills than elsewhere, they preferred to be self-employed. There are several reasons offered for Jews not being employed in large numbers in the mills, such as antisemitism and not being allowed to observe the Sabbath. In McKeesport Hungarian Jews were seen as “Honkies,” that is, Hungarians rather than Jews, and were hired in larger numbers. “The phenomenon of Jewish workers in heavy industry in McKeesport – which seemed at the outset of this study to be so unusual as to constitute an anomaly – turned out to be just that. It proved to be an aberration that did not last.” (98)

The Jewish artisans, peddlers, and storekeepers in McKeesport and the other milltowns in Western Pennsylvania had an important advantage over other immigrants. They were usually literate, knew about handling money, and were familiar with the many East European languages spoken around them, including Hungarian, Ukrainian, Polish, and Russian. They also spoke “Slavish,” an American linguistic phenomenon, with jargon based on the common roots of various Slavic languages that became a kind of lingua franca in Western Pennsylvania.

One of the most interesting parts of the book is chapter 3, “The early years in America.” Using oral histories, unpublished memoirs and theses, and histories published between 1893 and 1996, as well as basic raw materials such as the Pennsylvania ledgers in the R.G. Dun & Co. Collection at the Harvard Graduate School of Business, Perlman is able to present a multifaceted description of why Jews settled where they did.

Chapter 4, “One family’s story: the Spiegels,” is a delightful interlude. Based on Perlman’s interviews with members of the Spiegel

family, as well as taped oral histories, it describes the place of origin of the family, how it made a living, and how and why eight of the nine siblings left to settle in the McKeesport area. “It was a complex web connected by marriages, business relationships, and by mutual giving and taking of help and support.” (45-46) However, as is true for so many American Jews, “the dark side of history also intrudes.” (47) There was a ninth sibling, Avraham, who perished in the Holocaust along with his family. Perlman concludes this chapter by noting the rapid upward mobility of the American-born generation.

In succeeding chapters Perlman deals with Jewish immigrants’ adjustment to American life and the growth and decline of the percentage of Jews in the milltowns he investigated. He concludes, “The Jewish populations in the milltowns dwindled, the stores closed, membership in the synagogues and Jewish organizations declined, and people moved to other towns or to Pittsburgh.” (100)

While Orthodox synagogues in the other small towns mentioned by Perlman became Conservative or Reform or have disappeared altogether, Gemilas Chesed, founded in 1886, is still “a citadel of Orthodoxy.” (91) It is now located in neighboring White Oak (walking distance from McKeesport). The Reform temple B’nai Israel has also moved to White Oak. There is even a new infusion of Orthodox Jewish life with the establishment of the Mesivta of Greater Pittsburgh (boys’ religious high school) in White Oak.

There are a few minor errors: “me’hutza” (68) should be mehitsa; “shnoodered” (69) is a pejorative term combining the Yiddish “shnorn” to beg with the Hebrew “neder” vow; “Arbeiter Verein” should be “Arbeiter Ring” (90); publication information on Lee Shai Weissbach’s article listed in the bibliography is missing. (109) One of the most important institutions in Jewish life, the mikve (ritual bath), is mentioned only once, on page eighty-five. McKeesport was known for many years as the site of the only kosher mikve between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh. The most famous Jew of McKeesport origin, Sophie Irene Loeb, is not mentioned, although her brother is noted in passing.

Perlman has made a major contribution to the study of how and why Jews came to America’s milltowns. The pages of maps and photographs, the statistics, the comprehensive bibliography,

index, and notes, as well as the many anecdotes included in the text, integrate serious scholarship with lively human interest material. This book is highly recommended for historians of the American Jewish experience and for the descendants of Jewish immigrants, Hungarians, Galizianers, Litvaks, et al.

---

*Ida Selavan Schwarcz is a retired librarian now living in Arad, Israel. She has published a number of studies about the Jewish community of Pittsburgh.*

Theresa M. Collins, *Otto Kahn: Art, Money, & Modern Time* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), xii + 383 pp.

This detailed and masterful biography of Otto Kahn presents an encompassing and vivid portrait of this prominent cultural patron and investment banker, who was a partner of Kuhn, Loeb, and Company. This meticulously crafted and thoughtful work extends well beyond *The Many Lives of Otto Kahn* (Pendragon Press, 1963) by Mary Jane Matz and *Otto the Magnificent: The Life of Otto Kahn* (Scribner, 1988) by John Kobler. The Collins's is the first scholarly biography of this German Jewish financier to be published. Theresa M. Collins wrote her doctoral dissertation about Kahn under Thomas Bender at New York University. Having revised her dissertation, Collins, who is an associate editor of the Thomas A. Edison Papers, has produced a magisterial book about Kahn's fascinating career. The biography contains an introduction and ten chronologically and topically arranged chapters. It reflects extensive research as well: Collins especially has meticulously combed pertinent sources in Kahn's papers in Princeton's Firestone Library. In writing the biography, she also consulted business letters and records housed in Harvard's Baker Library, in the Pierpont Morgan Library, and in the American Jewish Archives. To explain Kahn's contributions to the Metropolitan Opera, Collins has probed the archives of this institution.

Moreover, the major theses advanced by Collins are quite persuasive. In this business and cultural biography, she depicts Kahn's multiple roles in light of the concept of modernity: this concept helps to describe his successful role as an intensively competitive investment banker. Modernism also serves as the basis of Kahn's behavior in other realms, effectively illustrating his prominent status as a patron of opera and the arts and thus enabling him to promote bourgeois culture. Collins as well demonstrates that Kahn's thinking about liberal, authoritarian, and totalitarian political cultures and his attitudes about both Jewry and Germany can be explained in light of modernist notions.

In the first chapter, which is titled "Foundations," Collins presents an insightful account concerning Kahn's early life and personal

qualities. He was born on February 12, 1867, in Mannheim, Baden, to the cultured Emma Eberstadt Kahn and banker Bernhard Kahn. Collins shows that his parents endowed him with cultural capital, for he displayed a passionate devotion to education and the arts. Reared in a city and in a family with a culturally rich milieu, Kahn as a child was privately tutored: at about age eleven he especially revealed admiration for music, learning to play the violin and piano. Along with his brothers, Kahn in his mid-teens studied in a gymnasium, an institution that enabled him to acquire attitudes and pertinent ideas of classical, humanistic, and German culture. By the early 1880s he experienced additional acculturation, attending some sessions in the salon of his Aunt Bertha Hirsch and thus meeting writers, artists, and musicians in the city's finest institution of its kind.

Collins well shows that Kahn's life during the 1880s and 1890s was shaped in other ways. Kahn at this time received minimal exposure to Judaic practices in his family. He also served for one year with the Hussar unit in Mainz and came to dislike German militarism. The author also stresses his desire to achieve financial independence; unlike his brothers and sisters, who pursued professions in teaching and in the arts, Kahn entered the world of banking. He accepted a position in 1888 with the Deutsche Bank in Berlin and was promoted two years later to the position of vice manager in its London office. Collins well assesses his successes in London during the early 1890s. As a result of German Jews being well received in London during these years, Kahn became part of the cultural and social circle of Sir George Henry Lewis and was naturalized as a British subject in July 1893. Moreover, the ambitious Kahn did well with Deutsche Bank, but decided to accept a position in 1893 with Speyer and Company in New York City. Collins astutely depicts his activities in New York. Because of internal dissension in the Speyer firm, he left the international banking house in late 1895. As a consequence of his marriage on January 6, 1896 to Addie Wolff, and of his father-in-law, Abraham, being a partner in Kuhn, Loeb, and Company, Kahn became associated with the leading German Jewish investment firm in the United States. Despite protests from the firm's head, Jacob Schiff, Abraham Wolff succeeded in 1897 in having his son-in-law named as a partner. As Collins astutely

observes, Kahn, even though he lacked the wealth and status of Felix Warburg, Schiff, and other partners, would significantly contribute to the firm's operations.

The second chapter, "Metropolitan Scenes in the Harriman Cycle," contains comprehensive accounts about Kahn's role in American finance capitalism and about his place in New York City's cultural life during the first two decades of the twentieth century. After the death of Abraham Wolff in 1900, Kahn proved to be a capable leader in Kuhn, Loeb; he developed cordial relations with the combative E. H. Harriman and secured funds required for the expansion of his railroad empire. Kahn helped to solidify the operations of his client's Union Pacific Railroad and to acquire large amounts of stock in James J. Hill's Northern Pacific Line. In the railroad feud between Harriman and Hill, Kahn played a central role in bringing about a compromise: he secured the consent of both railroad titans in November of that year for the creation of the Northern Securities Company. Until its investigation by the Interstate Commerce Commission between 1906 and 1907, both railroad leaders directed the Northern Pacific Line by controlling 96 percent of its stock.

This chapter also contains a lengthy section about Kahn's intensive involvement in the activities with the Metropolitan Opera Company. Between 1903 and 1910 he was associated with significant achievements of this institution. The eminent banker and cultural patron served on the board of the opera, provided financial help to its owner Heinrich Conried, and by 1909 became its president and dominant stockholder. Kahn's leadership during these years enabled the Metropolitan Opera to stage productions of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* and the controversial *Salome*, to contract as its conductor the services of Arturo Toscanini, and to begin to transform itself into a modern cultural institution. The last section of this chapter extends beyond the realm of culture and is quite suggestive. The author shows that Kahn, even with the support of Lord Beaverbrook, refused to become a candidate in British politics in 1913. The New York financier decided to remain in the world of investment banking, and in 1917 he was naturalized as an American citizen.

The third chapter centers on an examination of Kahn's activities during World War I. Collins rightly maintains that partners at Kuhn, Loeb were split in their views about supporting major belligerents during this war. However, members of the House of Morgan, who backed the entente powers, levied criticism against the "German Jewish" firm. Along with Mortimer Schiff, Kahn denounced German autocracy and militarism. He worked with Morgan partners to raise funds for the huge 1915 Anglo-French loan; Kahn in 1916 played a central role in marketing sixty million dollars' worth of bonds to provide assistance to Bordeaux, Lyons, and Marseilles. During the war years he also helped to foster artistic modernism: Kahn provided funds that enabled Nijinsky, Diaghilev, and other Russian Ballet members to tour America in 1916.

The book's fourth chapter reveals much about the financial thinking and activities of Kahn during the post-World War I years. Following the Versailles Settlement he encountered issues of modernity and ascended with great skill in the world of international financial diplomacy. Kahn, who spoke against American isolationists, was highly lauded by European leaders: he was admitted to the French Legion of Honor and to the Italian Order of the Crown. After the death of Jacob Schiff in late September 1920, Kahn, who constantly tried to obtain additional power within Kuhn, Loeb, did acquire seniority within the ranks of this firm. Furthermore, he displayed during the 1920s aggressive leadership skills, contributing in numerous ways to the rebuilding of Europe. As one of the founders and directors of the Council on Foreign Relations, he advocated an international vision of finance. He believed that monies were required to flow to numerous financial centers to stabilize European states and to thwart the spread of Bolshevism.

Collins in this chapter lucidly portrays Kahn as an internationalist in the realms of finance and culture during the early 1920s. Then he purchased shares in Austria's Creditanstalt. Two years later he assisted in selling thirty million dollars in bonds to finance French railroads. Kahn in 1922 also helped to distribute fourteen million dollars of bonds for the newly created Czechoslovak Republic. Moreover, he played an active role in trying to bring stability to Germany – a nation

that greatly suffered from hyperinflation and high unemployment. The author well explains that despite their antisemitic feelings about him, members of the House of Morgan worked with Kahn to secure funding for the huge 1924 German External Loan. Consequently, the capable Kahn, along with other New York financiers of this syndicate, helped Germany to avert economic disaster and to make reparations payments in light of the terms of the Dawes Plan. Moreover, the author demonstrates that Kahn developed an international cultural agenda during the vibrant Twenties. This advocate of the League of Nations in the arts backed efforts to bring German opera back to the Metropolitan, provided funds for French and Russian ballet performers to come to America, and supported productions of British and Irish plays in several New York theaters.

The fifth chapter focuses on a discussion of Kahn's "Protocol of Patronage." He used his money in different ways to support the arts; the generous Kahn emerges as a broker of various cultural productions and as a contemporary Medici who gave new meaning to modernity. His private patronage, for the most part, was extended in the form of loans and helped to benefit numerous artistic, musical, and literary figures. Collins well describes the careers of three of Kahn's benefactors. As a consequence of receiving aid from this banker patron, the talented Bel Geddes was placed in the propitious position of being able to sign a fairly large contract with the Metropolitan Opera Company. During this time, Kahn also contributed to the advancement of the Afro-American Renaissance, helping the aspiring actor Paul Robeson. His loans enabled Robeson to perform in plays in the Provincetown Theater and to star in the Broadway production of *The Emperor Jones*. There is also a lengthy section about Hart Crane, who attempted during the 1920s to write a poem that would offer a synthesis of the major values of American culture. Collins explains in detail that despite extending several loans to this talented and troubled poet, Kahn, who was disappointed with the contents of "The Bridge," decided to terminate his financial relationship with Crane. As the author persuasively shows in this chapter, Kahn emerges as "Otto the Magnificent," trying to improve relations between Jews and Gentiles and to enhance the cultural status of New York.

The sixth chapter, titled “Tears and Bears,” reveals Kahn’s various activities during the 1929 New York Stock Exchange crash and its preponderant effects upon him. Like Maury Klein in *Rainbow’s End: The Crash of 1929* (2001), Collins maintains that this crash and that of the bond market in 1931 brought an end to an era of financial and industrial prosperity in America and in Europe. Moreover, Collins thinks that the massive selling of bears tore apart economies on both sides of the Atlantic. As the author shows, Kahn, along with his partners at Kuhn, Loeb, had been purchasing conservative investments during the late 1920s, anticipating a sharp decline in the business cycle and in the bond and stock markets. Following the October stock market crash, Kahn, who attributed this event to easy credit and excessive speculation, suffered considerable losses, but fortunately remained solvent.

There are also in this chapter persuasive accounts regarding Kahn’s views toward Germany and Jewry. Prior to the 1929 and 1931 crashes, Kahn became a staunch booster of the Weimar Republic, selling, among other things, bonds for Hamburg and for Berlin’s Darmstaeder & Nationalbank. Recognizing the significance of a viable Germany, he denounced the 1922 assassination of the Weimar Republic’s German Jewish foreign minister, Walter Rathenau, but supported the provisions of the Young Plan relating to German reparations. Moreover, Kahn, who spoke and acted against Nazi antisemitism, helped his sister Lili Deutsch and her family flee from Germany during the early 1930s. The financier was quite cognizant of his Jewish identity. He wished to build a new facility for the Metropolitan Opera Company. Realizing that his goal would never be achieved and that his opponents on the company’s board, who were from old-guard Protestant New York City families, looked upon him as an aggressive Jew, Kahn resigned from his positions as the company’s president and chairman (in October 1931).

The remaining chapters of the book describe the last three years of Kahn’s later career. During the early 1930s he continued to alter his political and religious thinking. A liberal Republican for many years, Kahn was disappointed with Herbert Hoover’s policies and programs for resolving the problems of the Depression. He refused to contribute

to the Republican Party in 1932 and, after the presidential election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, tended to back some New Deal legislation. During the Pecora Senatorial Hearings the next year, Kahn supported Roosevelt's banking legislation and called for the enhanced role of the national government in monitoring activities of investment banking firms. Collins also shows that matters regarding Judaism were of significance to Kahn during these years; he perceived the antisemitic ideologies of Hitler as being associated with the madness of modernity. Kahn, who was not particularly religious, began to make donations to Jewish organizations that tried to help Jews leave Germany. In the final chapter the author discusses Kahn's sudden death on March 29, 1934, and mentions major tributes paid to him.

This splendid biography greatly contributes to the scholarship about American Jewish financial and cultural history during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The book is lucidly written and well organized. It also contains detailed endnotes and a comprehensive bibliography. However, a cogent concluding chapter would have significantly bolstered the many persuasive arguments advanced in this study. Such a chapter as well would have provided valuable context about Kahn's many contributions to Atlantic history, accentuating how finance capitalism, major cultural movements, and antisemitic ideologies relate to the thesis of modernity in both America and Europe. Nevertheless, this biography will be considered as the classic study of Otto Kahn.

---

*R. William Weisberger is a professor of history at Butler County Community College in Pennsylvania and has written the essay about Otto Kahn for Oxford University Press's American National Biography. He has also written an essay titled "Freemasonry As A Source of Jewish Civic Rights in Late Eighteenth-Century Vienna and Philadelphia: A Study in Atlantic History" for the East European Quarterly and has served as the senior editor of a book regarding Freemasonry on both sides of the Atlantic.*

*Frederic Krome*

**Yoram Bar-Gal, *Propaganda and Zionist Education: The Jewish National Fund, 1924–1947* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003) 210 pp.**

The Jewish National Fund (JNF) was established in 1902 by the World Zionist Organization in order to buy land in Eretz Israel (the land of Israel) and hold it in trust for the Jewish people. Over the next two decades the JNF grew into a worldwide organization dedicated to a variety of activities related to land acquisition. The most enduring, or least most visible, of its fundraising activities was the Blue Box campaign. Small blue boxes were placed in Jewish schools, homes, and communal institutions, which encouraged children to participate in the process of fund raising. Through activities such as these the JNF has involved over three generations of Jewish children in the Zionist enterprise. The Blue Box campaign was in fact merely one manifestation of a wide-ranging propaganda policy designed to help the JNF fulfill its *raison d'être*. The boxes were inexpensive to produce and contained a variety of images, especially maps of the historic lands of Israel. In order to raise the necessary funds to purchase land, the JNF established a variety of educational initiatives that sought to establish ties between the diaspora communities – especially in the United States – and the JNF's work in Mandatory Palestine.

The strength of Bar-Gal's book is in his careful delineation of the various means whereby the JNF publicized its activities. In addition to the inexpensive blue boxes, the JNF also created slide presentations and sponsored the making of films of Zionist activities. Bar-Gal provides a fascinating exposé as to how geography, specifically maps, was utilized for propaganda purposes. Although the book's strengths are in its utilization of primary sources and careful discussion of controversial issues, the author was not well served by the University of Rochester in copyediting. Translated from a 1999 Hebrew edition, the book suffers from a number of poorly edited sections.

Zeev W. Mankowitz, *Between Memory and Hope: The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 335 pp.

The surviving remnant of European Jewry – *She'erith Hapleithah* in Hebrew – is an almost mythic group in Jewish history. Their continuing suffering after liberation (ably recounted in Leonard Dinnerstein's *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust* [1982]) and their role in the establishment of the State of Israel have received wide attention. Yet the men, women, and children who made up the remnant of European Jewry that survived the Holocaust remain somewhat elusive figures. Too often we tell their story as if they are only symbolic of Jewish suffering, or as if their redemption must be understood as part of the creation of the modern State of Israel. Yet despite great odds, the psychological trauma of losing families and homes, and remaining for months as displaced persons, many of these survivors rebuilt their lives. Mankowitz tells the story of the challenges, failures, and triumphs of *She'erith Hapleithah* in their own right and as such is a welcome addition to the historical literature.

Eschewing the hagiography of popular legend, Mankowitz instead re-creates the world in which *She'erith Hapleithah* was formed. The quarter of a million Jews who made up this community initially sought political unity in order to strengthen their position with both the Anglo-American military authorities and the United Nations Rescue and Relief Administration (UNRRA). Despite some initial successes, the survivors were as prone to political divisiveness as any Jewish community. Mankowitz's artful and balanced telling of this political story reminds us of the old adage: two Jews, three arguments. There are many different stories told in this book, from the political machinations of the Anglo-American alliance over the survivors to the internal struggles among *She'erith Hapleithah* to define themselves to the politics of education in survivor-run schools. This book provides the reader with a greater appreciation of how the surviving remnant of European Jewry overcame their traumas and went on to rebuild their lives.