

Herbert Alpert, *Louis Marshall, 1856–1929: A Life Devoted to Justice and Judaism* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, Inc., 2008), 226 pp.

The life of Louis Marshall is an extraordinary subject for a biography. From 1904 to 1929, he was the foremost champion of Jews' civil rights in America and abroad. He fought at the barricades of some of the great civil rights battles of his era and made presidents and foreign powers listen to the cause of the oppressed. No one before or since Marshall has occupied so dominant a position in American Jewish communal life.

Remarkably, in spite of Marshall's profound influence, no scholarly biography of him exists. Brief sketches of his life abound, and rarely a year goes by without a new book or article touching on discrete facets of his career. But a comprehensive treatment of his life and works has yet to be attempted, let alone completed.

Louis Marshall, 1856–1929: A Life Devoted to Justice and Judaism does not presume to fill the void. The author, Herbert Alpert, is not a professional historian. An unabashed admirer of Marshall, he has spent years researching his subject. That labor of love has produced a charming book that traces Marshall's Horatio Alger rise from humble beginnings in Syracuse, New York, to national and international renown. In the process, the author reviews some of Marshall's most impressive achievements, including his leadership in persuading the United States to abrogate the Russian-American Treaty on Trade and Navigation of 1832; his valiant (albeit unsuccessful) defense of Leo Frank in the U.S. Supreme Court; his fight during the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 to guarantee the civil and political rights of racial, religious, and linguistic minorities; and his role in extracting a public apology from celebrated industrialist Henry Ford, who perpetrated one of the most serious antisemitic episodes in American history.

To be sure, readers seeking new information about Marshall's career may be disappointed. Much of the book goes over well-traveled ground. The one gap in the literature it admirably fills, though, is Marshall's personal life. Little was previously known of his relationship with his wife and three children, but thanks to Alpert that is no longer the case. From the American Jewish Archives' Marshall Collection, Alpert has unearthed private correspondence that sheds new light on Marshall's interior life. Indeed, the letters between Marshall and his wife reveal a tenderness and sentimentality that come as something of a revelation, especially given accounts by some of Marshall's contemporaries about his toughness and arrogance.

For all its imperfections, Alpert has produced what stands as the only full-length biography of Marshall in print, and for that he is to be commended.

Henry M. Greenberg is a trustee of the Historical Society of the Courts of the State of New York. He is the author of "Louis Marshall: Attorney General of the Jewish People," a chapter published in Noble Purposes: Nine Champions of the Rule of Law.

Baruch J. Cohon, ed., *Faithfully Yours: Selected Rabbinical Correspondence of Rabbi Samuel S. Cohon During the Years 1917–1957* (Jersey City, NJ: Ktav, 2008), 407 pp.

This edited volume of Rabbi Samuel S. Cohon's letters is a fascinating look at his understanding of not only Reform Judaism, but Conservative and Orthodox as well. Here Rabbi Cohon's son, Rabbi Baruch Cohon, presents inquiries and replies, sometimes even dialogues, about topics such as interfaith relations, religious observance, and the synagogue. He also intersperses commentaries on how his father's statements relate to the Reform Judaism of today. Some of these inquiries were addressed directly to Rabbi Cohon, some were forwarded from colleagues, and some were sent by readers of magazines for which Cohon wrote. These questions, posed by lay people and religious leaders (both Jewish and Christian) between 1917 and 1957, are in most cases similar to questions asked today. Cohon addresses issues of intermarriage, death, Zionism, religious observance, the rabbinate, the Reform movement, and antisemitism with grace and knowledge, and he presents his information in such a way that it reaches the needs of the inquirer, whether that person be a congregation president; Jewish religious leaders such as Rabbi David Max Eichhorn (a leader of the chaplaincy for the U.S. military) or Rabbi Solomon Freehof (a president of the CCAR and chair of its Liturgy Committee for a number of years); or members of the Christian clergy. Readers will find Cohon's statements not only interesting in historical context but helpful because we still deal with these same issues.

The section on antisemitism is most interesting, not just because many of these same problems still exist, but because Cohon explains how the antisemitic statements can be debunked using the Jewish texts from which the statements have been taken out of context. It is also interesting to see which standards Cohon keeps over the course of the forty years of this book and which ones he is willing to adapt to common practice. For example, he responds to a number of synagogue leaders about the question of moving the Sabbath to Sunday. On this he never waives: Sabbath is on Saturday, the last day of the week. However, on the question of reading the Torah on Friday night rather than on Saturday morning, he slowly accepts the practice that many synagogues had adopted because he came to realize that if people are going to attend services it is more likely to be on Friday evenings than Saturday mornings. The reader can follow his subtle changes in arguments on this subject over time.

The appendix is not to be overlooked. In this final section, we only see the letters from a young woman in Kentucky who is trying to find herself as she discovers the religion of Judaism that her mother never practiced upon moving to rural Kentucky with her Baptist husband. Unfortunately, Rabbi Cohon's letters to this woman are lost, but her vivid responses show the gentleness and forthrightness with which Rabbi Cohon wrote. Overall, this book is a very insightful and creative way to learn about the theology and expansive knowledge of Rabbi Samuel S. Cohon.

Mara Cohen Ioannides, faculty member in the English Department at Missouri State University, has published numerous articles on the history of haggadot and Ozarks Jewry. She has written and codirected a documentary on Ozarks Jewry and published an award-winning novel about the Jews of Greece.

Aviva Ben-Ur, *Sephardic Jews in America: A Diasporic History* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 321 pp.

Aviva Ben-Ur's *Sephardic Jews in America: A Diasporic History* is a landmark contribution to the history of those Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews who were all too often invisible to the "mainstream" Jewish community and to the historiography of American Judaism. Any review of the standard histories of Jews in the modern world—whether popular or academic—shows an astounding elision of the presence of non-Ashkenazi Jewry within the larger narrative of modern Jewish history.¹ At best, the Jews of the Ottoman Empire, North Africa, the Middle East, and Persia are treated as exotic and underdeveloped "outposts" on the margins of the "real" modern Jewish story. Ben-Ur is well aware of this historiographic erasure and sees her history as an essential corrective—giving voice to the Sephardic Jewish experience in America and challenging the classical narratives of American Jewish history.

Ben-Ur's extensive investigation into the panoply of mostly Ladino language sources (newspapers, pamphlets, and letters) and far-reaching interviews with Sephardic immigrants allow her to construct this history with depth and nuance. The book does not set out to tell a linear narrative; rather, it focuses on select sociocultural relationships as they developed between the Sephardic and Mizrahi immigrants at the center of her study, as well as those relationships among other groups: the older and well-established western Sephardic community of New York's Shearith Israel Congregation, the central and eastern European Jews who made up the overwhelming majority of Jewish immigrants to the United States, and different groups of non-Jewish Hispanics in New York. While her main focus is on the Ladino-speaking immigrants who came to the United States from the former Ottoman Empire during the first three decades of the previous century, Ben-Ur also includes nuanced discussions of the experiences of other non-Ashkenazi immigrants, such as the Romaniot, Syrian, and Yemenite communities.

After a solid introduction to the parameters and basic history of her main subject, Ben-Ur presents the complex history of the Ashkenazi adoption of the Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew in Israel and the West as a test case for considering the possible impact of Sephardim on the culturally hegemonic and numerically superior Ashkenazim. She concludes that, in actuality, Sephardim had almost no influence on this linguistic shift. Ben-Ur seizes upon this absence of influence to argue beyond the historiographic model of “impact and influence” as the guiding light of Jewish historical inquiry. Focusing on the impact of Jews on American culture, Ben-Ur argues, is more about apologetics than actually understanding the lives of American Jews. Looking at the “dynamics of exclusion” may offer a more appropriate historiographic model not only for the “minority within a minority” experience of non-Ashkenazi Jews but also to understanding the broader American Jewish experience. This argument is in line with her focus on the sociocultural periphery as an ideal way to appreciate the center. This chapter is, at times, somewhat disconnected from the rest of the book; however, the themes it explores—language, identity, modernity, and authenticity—inform everything that follows.

The analysis of eastern Sephardic interactions with their thoroughly acculturated, western Sephardic brothers teases out the fissures and tensions between these two groups. Again, Ben-Ur mines the Ladino press and the archives of Shearith Israel, as well as an eclectic assortment of memoirs and private correspondence, to present the varied aspects of this fraught relationship and what it tells us about identity, self-perception, language, and tradition.

Ben-Ur sees the relationship between Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews and Ashkenazim as one of “coethnic recognition failure.” All too often, Ashkenazim could not imagine the possibility of Jews that did not share in their own cultural traits. Ben-Ur gathers personal and communal examples of the invisibility or unintelligibility of Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews to their Ashkenazi neighbors. Ashkenazim were often completely incredulous of the possibility of a Jew not speaking Yiddish; they assumed that Syrian Jews were actually Arabs, or Yemenite Jews African. Ben-Ur clarifies that while Ashkenazi Jews were acutely aware of the differences between their own subgroups—shtetl Jews compared to city Jews, Lithuanians versus Poles, Germans versus Ostjuden—they never denied the Jewishness of their targets of ridicule or scorn. However, for most Ashkenazim, someone who “looked like an Italian, spoke Spanish and never saw a Matsah Ball in [their] life” was difficult to place within their Jewish taxonomy. Ben-Ur looks at how this failure of recognition evolved over time and how the Sephardic community navigated its way into mainstream Jewish culture.

The last chapter is possibly the richest and most illuminating area of Ben-Ur’s inquiry. She pinpoints the confluence of several global and local factors that created a unique moment of cultural embrace between eastern Sephardim and the wider Hispanic world. In this chapter we encounter Puerto Rican immi-

grants (then a small minority) enjoying “exotic” delicacies at Sephardi-owned restaurants with names such as *La Luz* and *La Estrella*. Ben-Ur discusses business and social connections forged through shared language between Sephardim and Hispanic immigrants, as well as Jewish Syrian connections with Syrian Christians in early twentieth century New York.

Ben-Ur takes us from the street to the ivory tower when she reconstructs the dynamic relationship between Sephardim and a new wave of Spanish literary scholarship that saw Ladino language and culture as an essential “missing link” of Spanish literary history. Federico de Onís, a path-breaking scholar who came from Spain to Columbia University in 1916, encouraged many Ladino speakers to cultivate and preserve the richness of Judeo-Spanish. Onís established a special unit dedicated to Sephardic studies at his Hispanic Institute at Columbia. For Onís and his circle, Ladino was central to understanding the polychromatic nature of Hispanic culture and history. Many eminent scholars were either directly trained at Columbia or were inspired by the openness of these pioneering scholars to rediscover the treasure of their Sephardic heritage. It is important to keep in mind that this “Hispanic embrace” of the Sephardim was at a time when there were almost no official programs in Jewish studies at U.S. universities and decades before multiculturalism would become a mainstream academic value.

Overall, this is an important, exceptionally well-researched and insightful work. My only criticism is the amount of space Ben-Ur dedicates to justifying her project. She eloquently *gives voice* to the sense of erasure felt by non-Ashkenazi Jews within the wider American Jewish community and within the world of Jewish historiography. This is an important corrective feature of this book. However, the fascinating history she weaves out of a labyrinth of sources and the analytical eye she brings to her subject speaks for itself. This history is justified ultimately by its ability to explore the fissures and complexities of Jewish identities—of pointing out the many competing, complementary, and contradictory identities at play within American Judaism—and their connections to language, faith, economics, and personal experience.

Ronnie Perelis is the Alcalay Assistant Professor of Sephardic Studies at Yeshiva University. His research and teaching focus on the nexus of Hispanic and Jewish culture in Iberia and the New World. He is currently writing a study of family and identity in the Sephardic Atlantic world.

Notes

¹The notable exception is David Biale’s edited volume, *Cultures of the Jews: A New History* (New York: Schocken Press, 2002). This anthology enthusiastically embraces the variety and nuance of the wider Jewish world.

Hasia Diner, *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1945–1962* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2009), 528 pp.

In this compelling study, Hasia Diner fundamentally challenges the commonly held assumption that American Jews expressed little interest in the Holocaust during the immediate postwar period. Using a wide range of evidentiary materials, she argues that the memory of the Holocaust touched almost every aspect of organized Jewish life in the years after 1945. According to Diner, immediately after World War II, American Jews began to create Holocaust memorials, involve themselves in political activities to benefit survivors, and invoke the genocide of European Jewry when promoting disparate strategies for strengthening Jewish life. They may not have used the term “memorial” when they described their remembrance tributes, but they certainly acted as “memorial builders.”

For decades, historians and other scholars promoted the view that a “myth of silence” pervaded American Jewish culture. This formulation suggested that American Jews ignored the Holocaust during the immediate postwar years because a more public commemoration would have clashed with their patriotism and acculturatory ambitions. According to Leon Jick, Nathan Glazer, and others, American Jews were encouraged to speak publicly about the Holocaust only in the 1960s after the Eichmann trial and Israel’s victory during the Six Day War. Diner is critical of all scholars who have articulated this view, but she is most disdainful of Peter Novick and Norman Finkelstein, whose books, she asserts, portray contemporary American Jewish interest in the Holocaust as a tactic to encourage Jewish allegiance with the State of Israel.

Over the course of six substantive chapters, Diner persuasively and methodically demonstrates that American Jews established a strong interest in the genocide of European Jewry as early as the waning months of the war. They partook in a culture of remembrance; among other things, they attempted to build physical monuments of varying scales, published memorial books, and created works of theater and art dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust. Yet, as Diner shows, the Holocaust shaped American Jewish culture in ways that lay outside the explicit realm of “memorialization.” American Jewish organizations invoked the Holocaust in varying political debates, including those that concerned immigration and the care of the displaced persons, the creation of the State of Israel, and the appropriate postwar relations between the United States and West Germany. They launched research projects to study and record the history of the Holocaust and interviewed survivors in the displaced persons camps and in the United States. Jews later invoked the Holocaust in their commitment to civil rights and to liberalism. Diner’s conclusion focuses on the 1960s as she considers how the myth of silence materialized.

Diner's compelling, albeit lengthy, study is an extremely important addition to the literature. Probing and compassionate, it dynamically challenges the myth of silence that has been so durable in popular and scholarly accounts of postwar American Jewish life.

Robin Judd is an associate professor of Jewish and European history at The Ohio State University. The author of Contested Rituals: Circumcision, Kosher Butchering, and the Making of Jewish Politics, 1843–1933, she currently is working on a project concerning European Jewish women who married American military men after World War II.

Henry L. Feingold, *Jewish Power in America: Myth and Reality* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Books, 2008), 178 pp.

Henry Feingold's newest book is an incisive and often profound analysis of the illusions and ironies of Jewish political heft in twentieth-century America. As he notes, it is a particularly timely subject when unalloyed American support of Israel is being questioned in various quarters.

An introductory chapter deals with the Jewish Diaspora's lack of "hard power," in contrast to the "soft power" resulting from various means of advocating and persuading (16, 41). In a series of interrelated chapters, he parses five key moments in recent American Jewish history: the failure to act effectively with respect to the Nazi persecutions of the 1930s and the Holocaust; the demand in the 1970s and 1980s that Soviet Jews have the right to emigrate; the Jewish role in American support of Israel; the motives of Jewish youth in the New Left counterculture; and the putative Jewish bias ascribed to "neocons" by some of the critics. These matters are contextualized according to Feingold's insightful, expert, and frequently witty perspective. He offers a masterful account of the failure of New Deal figures of Jewish background (except for Henry Morgenthau in 1944) and of fractious Jewish organizations to mobilize in order to assist European Jews, noting that Roosevelt's awareness of widespread antisemitism in the United States rendered it disadvantageous for him to do anything of substance to rescue them (e.g., 29–30, 41). Contrariwise, Senator Henry Jackson and his political allies latched onto the movement agitating to permit Jews to leave the Soviet Union, in this case expressing a confluence of Jewish concerns and the opposition to the Nixon/Kissinger efforts at détente in some political circles. Feingold's discussion of involvement of Jews in the New Left flashes back to the earlier Americanization of east European Jewish socialist radicalism, including the struggles of the Jewish Old Left with the Communist Party in the twenties and thirties. Calling attention to the difference between "Jewish radicals" whose "tribal bona fides are otherwise unclear" and "radical Jews who search for roots through a Judaic conduit," Feingold emphasizes the persistent and underlying American Jewish proclivity for liberalism (e.g., 140). This in turn allows him to analyze charges that the neoconservatives pushed Jewish

communal interests and that American foreign policy in the Middle East has been captured by a supposedly well-organized “Israel lobby.”

This is a book of aperçus that illuminate the complex Jewish involvement in the American political process for the last century, with implications for this dimension of Jewish history as a whole. Scholars and Jewish community leaders concerned with Jewish political behavior and attitudes in the American context should read it.

In the long run, according to Feingold, American Jewish power remains “a tenuous, fragile force that is mostly confined to the realm of ideas and values” (xii). Beyond the judicious realism and cool, balanced surface of his analysis are flashes of outrage about the omission of Jews from the “universe of obligation” in the modern world (20), worries about a resurgence of antisemitism—and, as he concedes at the very end, the importance for Jews and Americans of “a basic optimism that progress toward a better world can be achieved” (158).

Robert M. Seltzer is professor of history at Hunter College and the Graduate School of The City University of New York. He is the author of Jewish People, Jewish Thought, and of many articles on modern Jewish history and thought.

Jeffrey S. Gurock, *Orthodox Jews in America* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009), 381 pp.

This excellent volume, by a historian, examines the history of Orthodox Jews in America from the earliest arrivals in the seventeenth century to the present. More specifically, the work focuses on how Orthodox Jews have coped with the various challenges of religious freedom, economic opportunities, and social integration that America has provided. As Gurock’s narrative unfolds, the reader is introduced to the varied lifestyles of Orthodox Jews, as they have sought to remain committed to halakhic traditions and practices while attempting to acculturate into mainstream society. It becomes clear that those positioning themselves under the Orthodox tent—the image used by Gurock—were far from uniform in Jewish observance and efforts at resisting and offsetting assimilative influences of the wider society. Indeed, by the 1870s, almost all of Americanized congregations had veered from Orthodoxy, and their survival was precarious. The critical turning point, it turns out, occurred during the last decades of the nineteenth century following the arrival of many profoundly observant Jews.

The first third or so of the work addresses the challenges that the earliest immigrants faced upon their arrival, particularly as they sojourned beyond the more populated Jewish urban centers along the east coast. The greatest challenge, as revealed in the chapter “Religious Dilemmas of a *Treif* Land,” was the drive to succeed economically along with the expectation that, to survive, Jews were often compelled to work on the Sabbath. As revealed in fascinating detail, the late 1800s saw, from various quarters within Orthodoxy, organized

activist efforts to retrieve the younger generation, which had experienced the thrust of Americanization leading to their acculturation and even assimilation. Chapters four through nine examine the key figures in this struggle and the respective claims, strategies, and compromises they endorsed.

To the uninformed, the Orthodox brand of Judaism is fairly uniform. Such a perspective, emphasizes Gurock, masks the heterogeneity characterizing Orthodox Jews' ritual and traditional practices. The chapter titled "Orthodox vs. Orthodox" focuses on how sides within Orthodoxy attend to the impact of modernity on everyday life, notably in views regarding the permissibility of secular education. Whereas to supporters of change, the role of tradition is flexible and must accommodate social change in the surrounding culture, opponents of change, by contrast, view innovations around them as unprecedented deviations from Jewish law. The range of controversies surrounding approaches and reactions to feminism forms the focus of an entire chapter. Another one, "Comfortable And Courted," details how Orthodox Jews are able to remain committed to an Orthodox lifestyle while taking advantage of various amenities the current culture has to offer. And yet, the picture for Orthodoxy is not entirely rosy: While numbers are increasing, on one hand, the potential for expanding dropout rates, even within the most committed of Orthodox communities, has become a problem. As in the past, Gurock observes, Orthodox Jews, as is the case for unobservant Jews, too, will learn to fashion and balance Jewish commitments to suit their needs.

This volume, superbly written and referenced and the product of dense scholarly research, is well worth the read. The history of America's Orthodox Jews is presented, warts and all. While highlighting many of the triumphs of Orthodox Jewry in America, Gurock is also sensitized to another inescapable reality: Included among those that are seemingly committed to the punctilious observance of the Torah's teachings are those who have committed "acts of unethical and even illegal turpitude." The story of Orthodoxy in America is, indeed, multifaceted.

As an ethnographer, I was particularly drawn by the author's prologue and epilogue, which contain valuable insights into his background and enable the reader to appreciate his sensitive sociological insights concerning the relative cohesiveness of the Orthodox community. The Jewish community—Orthodox and other streams, too—is in the throes of consequential change, and Gurock's volume lends valuable insights into how its most ever-expanding segment is managing to cope.

William Shaffir is professor of sociology at McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada. He has published on various aspects of ultra-Orthodox Jewry, including Hasidic Jews, newly observant Jews, and ultra-Orthodox Jews who have left the Haredi fold.

Ira Robinson, *Translating a Tradition: Studies in American Jewish History* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2008), 327 pp.

In distinguishing the fledgling American Jewish Historical Society from The Jewish Publication Society in 1892, Cyrus Adler insisted that the former must “publish at times dry as dust material.”(7) Fortunately, Ira Robinson did not heed his subject’s advice.

Translating a Tradition: Studies in American Jewish History is an engaging and important contribution to the field. The book compiles Robinson’s articles in three sections: on Adler, Orthodox Judaism in North America, and contemporary American Judaism, the last of which consists of a single article on American Jews and so-called “intelligent design.”

The first section, “Toward the Biography of an American Jew,” places Adler in the context of both American and Jewish history. Adler’s background in the secular academy, as an Assyriologist trained at Johns Hopkins, led to his attempt to establish American Jewish history as a modern, scientific discipline. Though he failed to professionalize the field, his efforts reflected his lifelong struggle to reconcile a modern, American sensibility with an unwavering commitment to traditional Judaism as he defined it.

Robinson outlines numerous examples of Adler’s balancing act. As a biblical scholar, Adler navigated between an appreciation of source criticism and an acceptance of divine revelation. Adler’s dedication to Americanism and Judaism, rather than to secular Jewish ethnicity, antagonized both Yiddishists and Zionists. In a chapter coauthored with Maxine Jacobson, Robinson describes Adler’s personal life becoming professional, as he was forced to contend with his wife Racie’s early sympathy for Jewish nationalism. Though both Cyrus and Racie preferred Hebrew to Yiddish, they “modeled in themselves a consciously Americanized Judaism,” wishing each other a good “Sabbath” (as opposed to Shabbat or Shabbos) every Saturday to demonstrate their “commitment to creating an American Jewish vocabulary.” (165)

Adler displayed his commitment to American Judaism most sincerely as president of The Jewish Theological Seminary. Robinson’s two essays on this topic attempt to rescue Adler from his reputation as a “sterile bureaucrat” (65) and instead celebrate him as the man who “managed the development of the Conservative movement.” (78) Robinson succeeds, pointing to Adler’s “knowledge of and belief in the American political system” (79) as his chief tool. Sensing his movement’s relative weakness, Adler emphasized common Jewish values and traditions but eschewed rigid ideologies for the seminary. His pragmatism enabled the United Synagogue membership to increase nearly tenfold under his tenure, setting the stage for the Conservative movement’s massive postwar growth, when it could “afford the luxury of ideological definition.” (81) Adler was “an enabler” (142) who helped build and maintain the institutional face

of a Conservative Judaism that would dominate the American Jewish scene in the postwar era.

After his examination of a leading figure of Conservative Judaism, Robinson's second section highlights the more religiously observant in the American Jewish narrative. Here, too, Robinson shows that a dedication to halakhah did not preclude efforts at modernization. The first Hasidic rabbis in North America came to the United States and Canada in the early twentieth century not because of persecution, but because of the opportunity to lead their own congregations. As opportunists, they resembled other Jewish and non-Jewish immigrants who sailed to the *goldene medinah* (golden land). And despite their self-imposed seclusion, certain *haredim* (ultra-Orthodox) attempted at least some form of integration into the broader Jewish community, if not the American community at large. The Cleveland-based Yiddish writer Samuel Rocker (1864–1936), for example, offered a sanitized version of Hasidism in his stories “in which those elements which would appear most foreign to modern civilization were either suppressed or else de-emphasized,” (232) thus placing *haredim* within the American Jewish fold. New York Orthodox Rabbi Moses Feinstein, on the other hand, made peace with the simply “modern” Orthodox, “to cast his net as widely as possible for adherents of halakhic Judaism.” (253)

Both Rocker and Feinstein, like Adler, tried to strike a balance between Judaism and Americanism. Though the former figures leaned much more heavily to tradition, they felt stronger bonds with their less observant co-religionists than with American gentiles. In the final two chapters, which deal with Orthodox responses to evolution and American Jewish responses to intelligent design, Robinson demonstrates another area of relative consensus among American Jewry. While numerous Orthodox Jews have tried to make peace with science and religion, intelligent design has not found many adherents in their or any other Jewish community. Indeed, Robinson shows how Orthodox Jews have renounced creationism in an effort to distance themselves from fundamentalist Christians.

Through his essays, Robinson brings to light underappreciated efforts of various Jews who attempted to translate their traditions to an American setting. These informative chapters are unfortunately marred by numerous typographical errors. Despite these flaws in presentation, Robinson's book is an important and effective contribution to the field of American Jewish history.

David Weinfeld, originally from Montreal, Canada, is a doctoral candidate in Hebrew and Judaic studies and history at New York University. He received his bachelor's cum laude in history from Harvard University in 2005.

Barry Seldes, *Leonard Bernstein: The Political Life of an American Musician* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 296 pp.

The political convictions of a typical American Jew in the decades from the beginning of World War II until the end of the Cold War are easy to reduce to generalization. Such a citizen was very likely to be supportive of civil rights and the ideal of racial equality, alert to violations of civil liberties, sympathetic to the left, aghast at the conservative and Republican abuse of power, hostile to the military intervention in Vietnam, and eager to promote international conciliation and dialogue rather than ratchet up tensions that might instigate war. These beliefs constitute the signature of postwar liberalism and are familiar to students of Jewish political behavior.

Among the exemplars of these beliefs was Leonard Bernstein, who was strikingly atypical in the grandeur of his musical gifts, in the fecundity of his imagination, and in the versatility and energy that characterized his career. His impact on the nation's culture was inescapable. As an American Jew, he did not soft-pedal his ethnicity, even as his unprecedented success validated the faith in the national promise of democratic opportunity.

The achievement of Barry Seldes's *Leonard Bernstein: The Political Life of an American Musician* is the revelation of how deeply and consistently politicized the maestro was. The frustration that this well-researched monograph cannot dispel, however, is how wide was the gap between the talent that was invested in the music and the dull predictability that Bernstein brought to political questions. Perhaps an even more peculiar feature of this book is that Seldes seems quite unaware of this disjunction.

Of course, there is no requirement that creativity in one field of endeavor should translate into acuity in another. (A rare exception is Vladimir Nabokov's distinction in both literature and Lepidoptera.) But this volume exhibits surprisingly little curiosity about the sources of the political engagement that marked the course of a lifetime. Seldes fails to directly and explicitly connect Bernstein's willingness to enlist in the movements against racial injustice—and on behalf of the Bill of Rights and antiwar causes—with liberalism's power to reassure the children of immigrants of the fundamental decency of a society that was gratifyingly open to reform. Only Bernstein's abiding and unstinting Zionism is shown to be an obvious consequence of his roots in middle-class Jewish Boston and the assumption that a commitment to the welfare of Israel was perfectly compatible with American citizenship.

A nonverbal art such as music is notoriously difficult to access in terms of moral or religious values. But Seldes has trouble entwining the musical career of his subject with his social vision, other than to offer vague and limited evidence of Bernstein's effort to record both suburban dissatisfaction (as in his opera, *Trouble in Tahiti*) and the postwar malaise of the age of anxiety (Symphony #2). The fault is not entirely Seldes's: *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue*, a musical

with lyricist Alan Jay Lerner, was intended to be a searing critique of slavery and racism and would have been Bernstein's most overt political work—but it bombed on Broadway in 1976 and was not revived.

Drawing on the huge dossier that the FBI so pointlessly compiled at taxpayers' expense, Seldes is at his most illuminating in showing the risks that Bernstein—perhaps unwittingly—took by signing the numerous progressive petitions that circulated in the cosmopolitan, avant-garde circles that he inhabited. The FBI failed in its effort to prove that he was a communist but did manage to get Bernstein blacklisted from CBS for a couple of years. The blacklist was lifted in 1954, when the telegenic conductor first appeared on *Omnibus*, the program that elevated him into one of the most influential of all educators of classical or “serious” music. (In that same year Columbia Pictures released *On the Waterfront*, for which Bernstein composed the haunting, Oscar-nominated score.) A year earlier, the U.S. Department of State had refused to renew his passport, a decision that—if upheld—would have made impossible the opportunity for him to serve as principal conductor of a major orchestra. But Bernstein expressed his remorse for association with communist fronts and causes and got his passport renewed. Four years later, he became principal conductor and then musical director of the New York Philharmonic, and for another decade his politics never got him into trouble. But in 1970, he and his wife hosted a party for Black Panthers, who needed to replenish their legal defense fund. Among those in attendance was the journalist Tom Wolfe, who coined the phrase “radical chic” to discredit such efforts. Bernstein's reputation never quite recovered. Nor, in a sense, did the liberalism that gave rise to that party—that hoped for American democracy to fully absorb a black community that showed increasing signs of radical disaffection, mistrust of Jews, and violence.

Wolfe's satiric article in *New York Magazine* did not mention that the FBI trolled through the social columns of daily newspapers to get the names of the attendees at the Bernsteins' soirée and thus generated files on Americans who did not previously have them. According to Seldes, a COINTELPRO operation was also designed to neutralize Bernstein himself, including gossip items that the agency tried to plant about the homosexuality that he had so carefully concealed. The press was not interested. But any assessment of Bernstein's liberal politics (which included his participation in the Selma-to-Montgomery march in 1965 to accelerate the struggle for voting rights in the South) should take into account what he was up against.

Stephen J. Whitfield is professor of American studies at Brandeis University and the author, most recently, of In Search of American Jewish Culture.

Gerald Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 630 pp.

Gerald Tulchinsky, one of Canadian Jewry's preeminent historians, offers us a vital overview of the history of Jews in Canada. Based upon the success of his earlier twin works, *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community* (1998) and *Taking Root: The Origins of the Canadian Jewish Community* (1992), Tulchinsky merges and builds upon these texts to provide a single-volume survey that spans more than two and one-half centuries. The breadth of information, sources, and ephemera utilized is truly remarkable. Clearly, the author's skills as a writer and a historian play an important role in the readability and accessibility of his new book.

Wherever relevant, Tulchinsky responds to the oft-alluded-to but rarely articulated question with which Canadian Jews—and Canadians in general—often grapple: Are we not just a northern version of American history? Tulchinsky successfully illuminates just how different the Canadian Jewish experience is from the American one, despite the obvious similarities and shared perspectives. While many a prewar eastern European Jew rarely distinguished between “America” and “Canada,” the development and evolution of the Canadian Jewish community were functions of distinct social, political, and urban combinations that differed from those obtained in the United States.

Tulchinsky does not shy away from internal Jewish strife. When discussing the strikes and labor disruptions that plagued the Canadian textile industry in the 1910s, the author illuminates how Jewish management and labor faced off and the social disruption that ensued. He also exposes the apprehension and lack of understanding Canadian Jews exhibited when facing Holocaust survivors for the first time, and the latter's disappointment in their reception. His knowledge of historical materialism and the important role of industry, labor, and political movements is laudatory, although at times exceedingly detailed. Paralleling leftist ideology with religious fervor, Tulchinsky employs deft metaphors, such as “secular missionaries” (264) and “messianic idealism,” (272) to describe the zeal of many communists and socialists. He even riffs on the stirring Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur prayer, *Unetaneh Tokef* (which relates how God will decide who will live and who will die in the upcoming year, and by what means):

They [the large department and chain stores] were the real titans of the apparel trades, indirectly deciding which firms would live or die—who by sudden bankruptcy, who by slow strangulation, who by labour strife, and who by despair” (262).

Despite the virtues of this volume, there remain some significant lacunae. First, there is no sustained narrative of women's perspective; although mentioned occasionally, women remain secondary elements of the plot. Further,

the author neglects the development of traditionalism among Jews in Canada. His examination of the Orthodox community and its rich history is reductive and, in certain instances, incorrect. For example, he notes that, “Strong efforts in Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg to establish a *kehillah* (community) organization, essentially for the supervision of *Kashrut*, were unsuccessful” (214). Despite controversy and strife, both Montreal’s and Winnipeg’s *Vaad Ha’ir* continue to function well into their ninth decades and cannot be labelled as unsuccessful. As well, the end of the book, in which the author has updated the text to reflect the first part of the twenty-first century, exhibits little of the detailed information of the first part of the book, which focuses on the first half of the twentieth century. And finally, Tulchinsky—like many others—neglects western Canadian experiences in favor of the more populous central and eastern sections of the country.

Despite some reticence about the representativeness of the work, Tulchinsky’s one-volume *Canada’s Jews: A People’s Journey*, will become an important reference and general history of Canada’s Jews. This book will certainly serve as an important introduction to Canadian Jewish history.

Steven Lapidus, former co-curator of the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, is a doctoral candidate in religious studies at Concordia University. While his primary focus is on the history of North American Orthodoxy, he has conducted research and taught on various topics in the study of religion. A recipient of more than a dozen scholarships and awards, he is also the author of several articles, written in both English and French, in the field of Canadian Jewish history. Currently, he is preparing his grandfather’s memoirs of life in a pre-World-War-I Ukrainian shtetl for publication.

Mel Young, ed., *Uriah: Uriah Phillips Levy, Captain, USN, and the Naval Court of Inquiry* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2009), 107 pp.

As this journal went to press, the AJA learned of the death of Mel Young (1930–2009). We join with his family and friends in mourning his passing.

Uriah Phillips Levy (1792–1862), who commanded a U.S. fleet in the Mediterranean, was the first Jew ever to rise to such a level of command. He is credited by his admirers—and by the tombstone he arranged to be erected at the Shearith Israel Cemetery in Cypress Hills, Brooklyn, New York—for the abolition of flogging in the U.S. Navy, although he was only one of several leaders in the movement and, given his ornery reputation, probably not the most influential. He still holds the navy’s record for being court-martialed six times and finally being cleared by two courts of inquiry. Levy was undoubtedly the victim of antisemitic fellow naval officers, but as he was the only Jew in the entire navy known to have endured comparable insults, it is clear from

the testimony at his hearings that his own combative disposition brought out prejudices that otherwise were kept under control.

Readers interested in Levy's life will turn to the fine biography by the late Ira Dye, published in 2006 by the University of Florida Press. Mel Young has reprinted, without any introduction or identification of the people or legal issues involved, much of the record of the court of inquiry of 1857 that led to Levy's exoneration and appointment as fleet commander. A one-page preface with a biblical quotation compares him to the biblical Uriah, whom King David sacrificed, and a blurb on the back cover commends the U.S. Navy for taking action against antisemitism.

It is very useful to have this material in an easily accessible book. However, it would have been helpful if the author had presented the context of the trial. For instance, identifying many of the actors in the trial would have revealed that Levy was closely connected to important people in President James Buchanan's administration (such as Secretary of State Lewis Cass, after whom he named one of his children) and the Democratic party (such as Louisiana Senator Judah P. Benjamin), and that these connections played the crucial role in his reinstatement and promotion. It would also have helped to know that Levy was not singled out for dismissal. He was only one of numerous aged naval officers who had served since the War of 1812 and was the only Jew who suffered dismissal during the Franklin Pierce administration (1853–1857). Scholars who want to study Levy's life and the issues behind his legal troubles in detail need to look at Dye's biography and the entire record, which has been photocopied from the National Archives and is available at the American Jewish Archives of the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, the starting point of any serious inquiry into American Jewish history.

Nevertheless, Young has gathered the most useful excerpts from the trial and presented them in any easy-to-read format. If an instructor provides background material, or a general reader looks into the above-mentioned sources, this book can prove extremely valuable for those interested in Levy's career, and the nature of antisemitism in the United States during the early nineteenth century.

William Pencak is professor of history and Jewish studies at The Pennsylvania State University.