

Jeanne E. Abrams, *Dr. Charles David Spivak: A Jewish Immigrant and the American Tuberculosis Movement* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2009), 226 pp.

Jeanne E. Abrams, director of the Beck Archives and the Rocky Mountain Jewish Historical Society and a historian of western Jewry, whose books include *Blazing the Tuberculosis Trail*, is the ideal person to chronicle the life and times of Dr. Charles David Spivak. Spivak played a pivotal role in the founding and development of the Jewish Consumptives' Relief Society (JCRS) sanatorium in Denver and served as its director. Going beyond the boundaries of a standard biography, Abrams frames Spivak's life in the context of American Jewish history and medical history. Not only was the turn of the twentieth century an important era for Jewish immigration, it was a transformative time for health care and tubercular treatment. This work is not only valuable as a biography but as a case study of the western health rush.

Fortunately for Abrams, Spivak recorded institutional minutes and was a prolific author and correspondent whose frequent topics were Judaism and medicine. These writings enrich the biography. During his youth, Spivak wrote for radical Jewish periodicals; later he penned articles for the *Jewish Exponent*, the *Forward*, and the *Jewish Encyclopedia*; and in 1915 he became the founding editor/contributor to the *Denver Jewish News*. He published in medical journals on the care of tuberculosis patients and wrote for the JCRS's *The Sanatorium*.

The book's chapters are arranged chronologically. Dr. Spivak's youth was similar to that of many Jewish immigrants. Born in 1861 to Orthodox parents, Chaim Dovid Spivakofsky spent his childhood in the southern Russian town of Kremenchug. There he spoke Yiddish at home and immersed himself in Russian language and culture with his friends. After a traditional *heder* education, Spivak attended the Russian gymnasium. Fascinated with politics, he gravitated toward socialism, joining the Socialist Revolutionary Party. Apprehended by the police for distributing radical publications, he escaped from Russia with the help of the party. He arrived in the United States in 1882, hoping to join an Am Olam agricultural colony in Oregon. However, the colony seemed unstable. Unable to farm, he joined other immigrants in factory work. He also typeset the *Jewish Messenger* and taught at the Alliance colony in New Jersey. In New York he made lifelong friends, including Abraham Cahan. As he became Americanized, Spivak remained a socialist, but he lost some of his radical zeal; as one of his friends noted, "Here revolutions were not needed. Opportunities for advancement were open." (32)

This proved to be the case for Spivak. Appointed librarian of the Young Men's Hebrew Association in Philadelphia through Alliance connections, he

became friends with wealthy Jews and immigrant eastern Europeans alike. In these formative years, Spivak attended medical school, met his future wife, and became an immigrant community leader. After medical school, he studied at the University of Berlin before beginning private practice in Philadelphia's Russian Jewish community.

His life changed in 1896 when his wife became ill and, like others, he "chased the cure" in Denver's dry, sunny climate. Denver became home to four religio-ethnic sanatoriums. Before the Spivaks reached Denver, Frances Jacobs, a tireless activist for charities, and Rabbi William Friedman, of the Reform Temple Emanuel, had incorporated the Jewish Hospital Association in 1890. Upon his arrival, Spivak opened a private practice and sought funds for the sanatorium, which did not open until it obtained B'nai B'rith support in 1899. However, the sanatorium did not meet community needs. Led by Reform Jews, it did not provide kosher food or admit sufferers deemed incurable. Spivak and other eastern Europeans sought modifications. When they failed, they founded a rival institution, the JCRS, in 1904. This new institution, like the Jewish National Home (JNH), was free; however, following Spivak's edicts, it observed Jewish dietary laws and accepted patients with advanced tuberculosis.

The JCRS sought small donations nationwide, while the JNH attracted wealthy donors. Spivak's prescription for tuberculosis treatment included fresh air, rest, and proper diet. Bringing together two of Spivak's interests, the JCRS operated its own farm; fresh eggs, milk, and produce nourished patients. With the success of the JCRS, Spivak gained a national reputation. His emphasis on a homelike setting separated the JCRS from industrial Progressive-era hospitals. Spivak instilled his medical philosophy in European hospitals when, after World War I, he volunteered as a special medical commissioner with the Joint Distribution Committee.

This book examines more than Spivak's professional life. Abrams also looks at Spivak's family, friends, and ability to blend Orthodox Judaism and science. His funeral was according to tradition, but his body, against Jewish law, was donated for medical examination. Although Spivak most certainly deserves this thoughtful biography, the tone at times unfortunately leans toward adoration. For those with a passing interest, it could be too detailed. However, for those studying American Jews and medicine, the treatment of tuberculosis, and western Jewish communities, Abrams's thoroughly researched book is a significant addition to these growing fields of study.

Ava F. Kahn is affiliated with the California Studies Center. Her publications include California Jews; Jewish Life in the American West: Perspectives on Migration, Settlement, and Community; and Jewish Voices of the California Gold Rush: A Documentary History 1849–1880. Jews of the Pacific West: Reinventing Community on America's Edge which she coauthored with William Toll and Ellen Eisenberg, was released this year.

Lila Corwin Berman, *Speaking of Jews: Rabbis, Intellectuals, and the Creation of an American Public Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 280 pp.

What is a Jew? This question is different from the perennial and always controversial “who” query, which seeks to establish standards of identity in order to delimit community boundaries. The “what” question is, instead, of an outward-facing nature; rather than marking the perimeters of the in-group, its purpose is to make Jewishness comprehensible to non-Jews. According to Lila Corwin Berman’s new study, this project consumed American Jewish intellectuals throughout the twentieth century, and the stakes were high. Explaining Jewishness, she writes, “became a political necessity and an act of Jewish survival.” (1)

Speaking of Jews: Rabbis, Intellectuals, and the Creation of an American Public Identity examines the efforts of Jewish leaders to “make Jewishness intelligible to the American public.” (6) Their goal was only partly to demystify Jewish identity and ritual for those who would otherwise view Jews as too exotic and alien to be part of the American body politic. Their larger project as representatives and ethnic brokers was to convince all Americans, Jews and non-Jews alike, that Jewish distinctiveness had positive value. Doing so, they hoped, would not only encourage inclusivity in American culture but would also assure Jews that they could maintain their Jewish identity while becoming acculturated.

They did this by borrowing from social science, which proposed that religion, ethnicity, and other forms of group identity were functions of social practices rather than racial disposition or divine directive. What Jews were, according to social scientists, was determined by experience and behavior. In this respect Jews were just like everybody else. This assertion recapitulated older European debates about Jewish emancipation and resonated in a nation where immigration had created a profoundly diverse national population. Thus understood, Jewish culture and religious identity could be valued for their universal significance.

Berman claims that “sociological Jewishness” provided twentieth-century Jewish intellectuals with tools to construct their arguments for an inclusive national culture; Jews’ “distinctive behaviors,” she writes, were “iterations of sociological rules followed by all American religious groups.” (70–71) Once Jewish difference was no longer regarded as a problem—once difference was, indeed, something all Americans had in common—Jews could discuss their distinctiveness without fear of alienation.

Though embrace of sociological frameworks facilitated Jewish inclusion in American life, it offered a vision of Jewish identity bereft of deeper meaning. It also threatened to undermine group cohesion. Debates over conversion proved particularly contentious. Could someone not born Jewish become so merely by taking up a set of behaviors and practices? Those who answered in

the affirmative, positing Jewish identity as a matter of individual choice, clashed with rabbis and intellectuals who resisted the idea that the boundaries of Jewish community were so porous.

Berman's analysis of these disagreements is fascinating, and her account of debates over both intermarriage and Jewish missionary efforts demonstrates that even acculturated American Jews disagreed about the meaning of Jewishness. A possible criticism of *Speaking of Jews* is its insularity; she limits her inquiry to Jews talking among themselves and might have done more to show that these intellectuals were involved in broader cultural exchanges about group identity in a liberal democracy. Nevertheless, Berman offers an innovative and eminently readable interpretation of American Jews' twentieth-century responses to the challenges of modernity.

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Ellen M. Eisenberg, *The First to Cry Down Injustice?: Western Jews and Japanese Removal During World War II* (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2008), 204 pp.

Jewish Americans have played a disproportionate role in movements for racial equality in the United States, and many Jews tend to think of themselves and their communities as unwavering defenders of equality. Yet when 120,000 West Coast Japanese Americans were arbitrarily confined by official order in 1942, Jewish community leaders and media nationwide failed to speak up in defense of their constitutional rights.

How do we explain this lapse? In an influential article published some years ago, Cheryl Lynn Greenberg attributed it in large part to the ignorance and indifference of national Jewish organizations with predominantly East Coast membership toward matters on the Pacific Coast. In *The First to Cry Down Injustice?*, a brief but troubling study, Ellen M. Eisenberg cogently poses the same question in regard to Jews on the West Coast, who lived amid large Japanese American populations and to whom such events were neither distant nor impersonal. Eisenberg argues convincingly that the silence of these communities was conscious and suffused with ambivalence. In an analysis informed by Eric Goldstein's recent work on Southern Jews and black civil rights, she suggests that West Coast Jews' acceptance as "white" throughout prewar decades hinged on the presence of a stigmatized nonwhite minority. Therefore, despite occasional criticism from coreligionists further east, West Coast Jewish communities maintained a prudent silence on discrimination against Asian Americans in order not to be identified too closely with nonwhites. A few elite Jews even

joined restrictionist groups. Eisenberg claims that this policy continued through the war: While scattered individuals protested Executive Order 9066, the collective Jewish response was obtrusive silence. She affirms nevertheless that this silence did not betoken agreement. Apart from one group in southern California that collected dubious information on Japanese subversives and supported mass roundup of Japanese immigrants—though not Nisei citizens—Pacific Coast Jewish leaders and journals more frequently expressed (heavily) veiled dissent through innocuous warnings against intolerance and support for the rights of unspecified groups of enemy aliens.

Unfortunately, perhaps in the interests of brevity, Eisenberg has omitted some important elements. First, she does not sufficiently differentiate between cities such as Seattle and San Francisco, where Asian Americans represented the largest racial minority and which featured small and long-established German Jewish communities, and Los Angeles, with its giant Eastern European Jewish population (who faced widespread antisemitism) and its largely Hispanic minority population. Similarly, in exploring the position taken by Jews in Los Angeles, Eisenberg fails to consider sufficiently the contribution of those in the movie industry. Jewish collaborators in Hollywood's wartime propaganda machine helped churn out a half-dozen movies that libeled Japanese Americans as spies and traitors (for example, the 1942 film *Across the Pacific*, with a screenplay by Howard Koch, featured a Nisei villain dynamiting the Panama Canal, while Aubrey Wisberg penned the 1945 thriller *Betrayal from the East*). More important, she neglects the significant role of Alfred A. Cohn, the screenwriter turned Los Angeles police commissioner. It was Cohn whose sensational (and fictitious) reports on Fifth Columnists helped persuade Los Angeles mayor Fletcher Bowron to support mass removal during January 1942, and which Bowron in turn used to lobby government officials.

Meanwhile, Eisenberg mischaracterizes the American Civil Liberties Union's (ACLU) position on Executive Order 9066 as noninvolvement. The ACLU, following a board referendum in mid-1942, did indeed vote not to question the order's constitutionality. It nonetheless permitted its lawyers to take the weaker stand of opposing the order's discriminatory application to Japanese Americans, as well as opposing the confinement itself. Thus Jewish ACLU lawyers such as Ernest Besig, A.L. Wirin, and Edgar Camp challenged official policy. Eisenberg fails to note that in the case of Ernest and Toki Wakayama, brought by Wirin and Camp with assistance from African-American attorney Hugh MacBeth, federal judge Henry Hollzer (whom the author terms a leading Jewish community figure) and two colleagues granted petitioners a writ of *habeas corpus* in early 1943. Tragically, by the time a hearing was scheduled, the Wakayamas, embittered by confinement, had withdrawn their petition and requested deportation.

The book also suffers from a certain amount of sloppiness. Eisenberg first states that the Socialist Party did not officially oppose removal (xiii), then correctly states that it did. (76). The journal of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is *The Crisis*, not *Negroes* (108), and the text renders Franz Boas as “Boaz” (97) and Mitsuye Endo as “Mitzuye” (149). Although the publisher is presumably most at fault, at least in the copy I purchased the bottom halves of pages 12 and 16 were effaced.

Notwithstanding such criticisms, Eisenberg has done commendable work, both by her research in organizational archives and her close readings of the Jewish press. Her thesis is solid and well-presented, and her examination of regional ethnic responses to Japanese American removal not only illuminates a vital aspect of the wartime events but opens up a new chapter of Western history.

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Ellen Eisenberg, Ava F. Kahn, and William Toll, *Jews of the Pacific Coast: Reinventing Community on America's Edge* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010), 309 pp.

Ellen Eisenberg, Ava Kahn, and William Toll, historians associated for some time now with the history of Jews of California, Oregon, and elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest, have produced an attractive book with their *Jews of the Pacific Coast*. Lavishly illustrated, full of portraits of interesting and notable individuals who played a role in the construction of Jewish life in the Pacific northwest and who helped build up the region itself, this book stands as a kind of state-of-the-art of western Jewish history. The theme of the book has a timely quality to it. Historians for a decade or so have turned their attentions to littorals and have begun to explore the impact of coastal regions on exchanges of goods, ideas, and people. While studies of coasts in American history have been dominated by the emergence of Atlantic studies, historians have also looked westward to the Pacific. This book, with its definition of the particular coastal region as not on the expansive and constantly changing “west,” which functioned as a shifting space in the context of American history, places its historical drama on the strip of land that went from the Canadian border on

the north to the Mexican border on the south. In the context of this region, the authors sought to answer two questions: How did Jews shape the region? And how did the region shape the Jews?

Eisenberg, Kahn, and Toll have a clear answer to both of those questions, which they would undoubtedly see as linked. Jews, present from the beginning, played a pivotal role in the settlement, development, and Americanization of the Pacific Coast. At no time did Jews not live, work, and, most important, trade there. Because of that and as a result of what the authors see as the essential openness of life on America's Pacific rim, Jews experienced few difficulties in fitting in, in being recognized by their non-Jewish neighbors for their centrality to civic life, and in achieving a high level of respect. In this and in the creativity and plasticity of Jewish institutions, they posit the Pacific coast as unique in the annals of American Jewish history. The general paucity of numbers, the authors claim, left its mark on Jewish patterns of settlement and integration. They lived in clusters so small that they had to become part of the general society.

Because this Jewish West differed from Jewish life in the large cities in the east and the midwest, at least as depicted here, the authors spend much time in this book lamenting the fact that American Jewish historians have by and large left this region out of their analyses. Yet *Jews of the Pacific Coast* takes its place in an already large body of historical works that explore something about western Jewry. What makes this book different from nearly all others is that, to its credit, it placed the Jews' acceptance into the reality of the region's encounter with race. On the Pacific coast, Chinese, Japanese, and Mexicans—a disparate set of nonwhite residents—provided the foil by which Jews could, and did, come to stand on the favored side of the racial divide. Nearly no other scholar before this triumvirate situated the process of Jewish acceptance in the context of the demonization of these particular groups.

The book, which surely will be considered an important reference work for future scholars, has its limitations. It repeatedly seeks to make a claim about Pacific Coast Jewish ingenuity when it came to constructing new forms of Jewish life, yet it repeatedly chronicles the activities of Jewish organizations and institutions founded in the east, directed by east coast Jews, and then adopted by Pacific coast Jews. In fact, Pacific coast Jews emerge here, not by design, obviously, as basically the importers of Jewish institutional forms from New York. What does this do to the fundamental analysis here? Similarly, we learn nothing about the outmigration from the Pacific coast and some Jews' moving back east. The authors take for granted that something called the "American Jewish experience" existed, and they set that supposedly singular experience up as the standard against which to measure the region of their interest (and residence). Furthermore, the authors devoted too much time to complaining about the historiography. The topic should stand on its own analytic merits and not just as a rebuke to scholars who did not consider it previously.

Despite its inherently defensive tone, one that echoed the words of many of the Pacific coast Jews quoted in this book, *Jews of the Pacific Coast* fills an important niche in the literature of American Jewish history. It is hoped that scholars of the Pacific northwest will embrace it as well.

Hasia R. Diner is the Paul S. and Sylvia Steinberg Professor of American Jewish History and director of the Goldstein-Goren Center at New York University. She has written numerous books in the fields of American Jewish history, immigration and ethnic history, and the history of American women. Her most recent work, We Remember With Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence After the Holocaust, 1945–1962, was released in 2009 by New York University Press.

Dana Evan Kaplan, *Contemporary American Judaism: Transformation and Renewal* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 446 pp.

Dana Evan Kaplan's monograph, *Contemporary American Judaism: Transformation and Renewal*, is a "popular overview of how American Judaism has changed since 1945." (xv) Kaplan draws from the contributions of historians, sociologists, and innovative Jewish clergy and lay leaders to survey the challenges facing today's American Jewish community. His first priority is illustrating how "the Jewish religion, as practiced by American Jews, has changed" (xxi) in the last several decades. In this volume, Kaplan is not very interested in ethnic expressions of Jewishness; he concentrates chiefly on Judaism as religious behaviors "performed by Jews" (xxi).

Kaplan's book is concerned with both outlining problems and exploring potential solutions. In the first category, a historical overview summarizes the large-scale shifts in American Jewish life since 1945. In two other chapters, Kaplan documents the waning strength of the major denominations, as well as the "collapse of the intermarriage stigma" (161). Five of Kaplan's chapters, on the other hand, discuss ways in which American Jews have tried to revitalize Jewish life. He first explores American Jews' experimentation in new religious ceremonies, social justice initiatives, and meditation as ways of "reengaging" with spirituality (56). He summarizes the achievements of Jewish feminists in the last half century and briefly touches on the growing acceptance of LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender/Transsexual) Jews in communal institutions. The *havurah* movement, Jewish renewal, and the *ba'al teshuva* movement make up the bulk of a chapter on "radical responses to the suburban experience" (258). An in-depth discussion of Chabad follows, in addition to an account of the efforts initiated in the 1990s toward synagogue renewal and transformation.

For scholars of contemporary American Jewish life, the first half of Kaplan's book is familiar territory. In large part, he touches on themes introduced in Steven Cohen and Arnold Eisen's *The Jew Within* (2001), the last chapters of

Jonathan Sarna's *American Judaism* (2004), and several publications by Jack Wertheimer. Susannah Heschel, Pamela Nadell, Judith Plaskow, and others have thoroughly documented the significant changes in Jewish ritual life inspired by a diverse group of Jewish feminists. There is no shortage of literature on intermarriage and Jewish communal responses; webinars pop up several times a month on the specific needs and concerns of Jewish millennials. But for a general audience, Kaplan's overview chapters on these subjects are highly readable and informative.

Kaplan's most significant contributions, however, come in the latter portion of his book. His final two chapters on the success of Chabad-Lubavitch and recent efforts at synagogue renewal are particularly engaging. Here, he begins to answer the question of what some institutions are doing *right* to meet the needs of their constituents. Kaplan devotes a couple of pages to the independent *minyanim* movement. In light of the recent publication of Elie Kaunfer's book, *Empowered Judaism* (on Kehilat Hadar, the first of these *minyanim* in New York City), Kaplan's chapter is quite relevant. The two books indeed complement each other well.

More generally, Kaplan's description of synagogue renewal efforts begs the question of impact. He adopts the leaders' perspective, for the most part, particularly in his description of the considerable effort individual congregations have devoted to creating institutional change. Implicitly, Kaplan suggests the need for more books like Kaunfer's, which document the degree of success these synagogues experience as a result of their initiatives.

It is difficult to discern Kaplan's personal assessment of contemporary American Judaism as far as its "spiritual health" is concerned. He is quite successful at divorcing his own religious perspective (that of a Reform rabbi) from his analysis. Kaplan firmly believes that the American Jewish community is becoming increasingly polarized, with the "middle ground"—once considered Conservative Judaism—all but obliterated (381). Perhaps "cautious optimism" would be an accurate description of the tone on which Kaplan ends his volume. He is acutely aware of the problems facing American Jewish leaders by the hybrid and fluid identities that characterize today's young Jews. On the other hand, he is at least a little bit confident that some of the initiatives he describes may be starting to address their needs.

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Ari Y. Kelman, *Station Identification: A Cultural History of Yiddish Radio in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 304 pp.

The soundtrack of my childhood, though I never analyzed it much at the time, included the voice of popular Jewish radio DJ Art Raymond on WEVD, the New York radio station that billed itself as “The Station That Speaks Your Language.” What that language consisted of by the time I heard it in the 1980s—and how the lingua franca of east European Jewry had evolved into an amalgam of Yiddish-inflected jokes and words, English patter, Israeli songs, and Jewish news tidbits of all sorts—is put into dramatic perspective by Ari Y. Kelman’s *Station Identification: A Cultural History of Yiddish Radio in the United States*. Given the richness of Yiddish radio’s offerings in America, the significance of its very existence, and the contemporary resurgence of popular and scholarly interest in Yiddish culture, it is surprising that no serious full-length study of Yiddish radio in America has appeared prior to Kelman’s. And it appears that, at least from the perspective of fact-finding about Yiddish on the airwaves, no further academic book will be necessary. Kelman has done a thorough job of amassing not only the names of personages and radio shows but also of appealing to social scientists beyond the world of Jewish academe, as he offers a framework for understanding Yiddish radio as part of a larger development of American ethnic identification.

After a somewhat ponderous introduction that is too reminiscent of the book’s origins as a doctoral dissertation, the first chapter traces the development of American radio in general, the rise of ethnic stations, and the resultant outgrowth of Yiddish radio. Kelman argues that this is one arena in which Jewish culture took a mainstream phenomenon—radio broadcasting—and sought to specialize it for a smaller public rather than taking the usual trajectory of Americanizing an immigrant institution. Though this part of the work is slow at times, there is a wealth of information about the early radio industry, down to details such as bandwidth and radio reception equipment. Even before there were Yiddish radio stations, Kelman points out, sales of radio transmitters skyrocketed in the urban neighborhoods where Jews and other immigrants lived. Also, he notes, the Yiddish-language newspaper *Forverts* included instructions for where to purchase equipment and how to use it.

One of Kelman’s main contentions is that Yiddish radio required the *creation of an audience*—a process that brought together native Yiddish speakers who preferred to hear news analysis and cultural guidance of all sorts on their stations, and other American Jews for whom Yiddish was simply a sentimental throwback to a world of Jewish tradition. Increasingly, broadcasts took place in heavily Yiddish-accented English, which is itself commentary on the uses of ersatz Yiddish culture as shorthand for Jewish cultural identification in America. As Kelman points out in relation to both types of listeners, they tuned

in to Yiddish radio to “hear themselves.” This accounted for the popularity of commercials and on-air patter that hawked kosher products or used an east European accent even after the late 1930s. The attraction of these stations was infectious even from the earliest days of immigrant broadcasting: In 1922, Kelman tells us, when twenty new stations went on the air in New York, half were Yiddish or Yiddish-English stations! He also offers a fascinating glimpse of the politicization of ethnic radio, detailing the creation of the Federal Radio Commission and the self-defense that ethnic stations of all languages mounted as a result of the government’s forcing them to prove their contribution “to the public interest” if they wanted to continue broadcasting.

Of course, Kelman introduces readers to the colorful cast of shows and personalities that made Yiddish radio memorable and beloved to its generations of listeners. Names like Mollie Picon and the Barry Sisters may be familiar to a wider audience, but indispensable features of the radio lineup such as Nukhem Stutchkoff, Seymour Rechzeit, the rhyming Zvee Scooler, and the advice-dispensing Rabbi Samuel Rubin are also dutifully included. Many times, while reading these descriptions, I thought of the extraordinary work of ethnomusicologist Henry Sapoznik, who has collected hundreds of hours of Yiddish radio programs over the years and created a number of CDs for today’s listeners, and I wished that Kelman’s book had come with an accompanying soundtrack. (Of course I am aware of the costs of publishing any academic text, but this would have certainly been a welcome addition.) In many regards, and with respect for Kelman’s impressive accomplishment, it is somewhat impossible to do more than catalog, analyze, and pay tribute to the myriad talents and voices that made up the phenomenon of Yiddish broadcasting without actually hearing them.

Kelman’s work shines—perhaps brightest of all—in his closing chapters that deal with the legacy and purpose of Yiddish radio for its listeners and, by extension, for today’s American Jewish community. Here, Kelman’s role as a prominent new voice exploring American Jewish culture and sociology comes through, as he poses questions that place Yiddish radio in a broader context. He introduces the term “heritage speakers,” coined by sociolinguist Joshua Fishman (219–220), and contends that much of the listening public in the twenty-first century fits this description of individuals whose ties to a language are more emotional than practical and who recognize the value of maintaining a distinct cultural heritage in today’s complex society. It is this continuing balance of cultural particularism and the modern environment that led to the creation of a Yiddish-listening public in the early days of Yiddish broadcasting and, as Kelman persuasively argues, it is what keeps the topic of Yiddish radio relevant today.

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Julian Preisler, *Historic Synagogues of Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2009), 127 pp. Illus.

Julian Preisler is a genealogist and archivist who for two decades has been photographing synagogues in each of the fifty states. In his introduction to this book, Preisler says he decided to focus on Greater Philadelphia because of the city's long history and great variety of Ashkenazic and Sephardic synagogue architecture. The black-and-white photos offered here indeed reveal a significant Jewish community following a familiar pattern seen throughout the United States. In the first half of the twentieth century, neighborhood synagogues in Philadelphia's crowded urban spaces were increasingly sold and converted to churches, retail outlets, and the like. By midcentury, congregations in the city and in neighboring cities in southeastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware were moving to the new and more spacious suburbs. Noted architects often designed these modern and impressive edifices.

The book is essentially a photo album, albeit one with useful captions; however, sometimes the information is inadequate. A photograph on page 90, for example, is of an unidentified synagogue that had become a church; the author photographed it in 1994 and notes that he does not know if the building is still standing. This should have been determined. Page 107 depicts a synagogue covered with graffiti, but the caption fails to comment on this. Occasionally two views of a single synagogue are shown, as on pages 60 and 61, but to no added advantage. The book has no index, and the synagogues are not presented according to when they were built, thus making it virtually impossible to find a particular synagogue without leafing through each page and reading each photo caption. Still, *Historic Synagogues of Philadelphia* does manage to document a significant aspect of the American Jewish journey.

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Fred Rosenbaum, *Cosmopolitans: A Social & Cultural History of the Jews of the San Francisco Bay Area* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 439 pp.

Fred Rosenbaum has written a sweeping account of the first century of Jewish life in the Bay Area (1848 to approximately 1948). In so doing, he has synthesized decades' worth of scholarship from a wide array of sources into an informative and entertaining narrative. His work will likely enthrall local history enthusiasts, and professional scholars will find his chronology, list of historical figures, notes, and bibliography to be a useful resource in the fields of local, state, and regional Jewish history and beyond.

Central to Rosenbaum's account is an exceptionalist argument which asserts that, thanks to the global nature of the California Gold Rush in 1849, San Francisco was born as a culturally diverse place. It is worth noting that this cultural tolerance did not extend to Native Americans, Sonorans, Chileans, and other ethnicities. Nevertheless, Rosenbaum tells us that the Bay Area, thanks to its Gold Rush heritage, "has continued to be one of the most ethnically and religiously mixed spots in North America, its many cultures simultaneously resisting both eradication and parochialism" (xiv). He highlights this cultural vibrancy through the histories of many Jewish artists, ranging from Oakland-born author and arts patron Gertrude Stein to classical music virtuosi such as Yehudi Menuhin and Isaac Stern. Those chapters that focus on artistic production are by far the most cogent and convincing in the book. This is particularly true of Rosenbaum's third chapter, a study of the children of the Gold Rush pioneers. In this section, the author deftly connects the experiences of Stein, theatrical producer and director David Belasco, painter Ernest Peixotto, and even Jewish retailer Abraham Gump, to demonstrate a certain freewheeling, cosmopolitan, Northern California Jewish identity—one that informed these figures as they made their way into wider worlds, such as fin-de-siècle New York and Paris.

Politically, socially, and religiously, *Cosmopolitans* offers a fairly standard narrative of Jewish life that would be recognizable in almost any urban American center. Throughout the book we read that Jews played a pivotal role in the debates between the political right and left, between labor and management, and, intra-ethnically, between assimilation and distinction. Rosenbaum would disagree with the contention that Jewish life in the Bay Area resembled the Jewish experience in other American places, however. He argues that the region was exceptional because of its relative lack of antisemitism, which Rosenbaum does demonstrate to some extent. Also, he asserts that the Bay Area's Jewish history is distinct because of the absence of a German/eastern European Jewish divide, arguing that almost all of the Jews around the Bay were of German descent or at least culturally affiliated with German Jewish norms. Still, his own work frequently references the existence of eastern European Jewry, and,

what is more, his assertion does not at all jibe with Hasia Diner's convincing argument that the changing boundaries of nineteenth-century central Europe render demographic distinctions between German (or even Germanic) and eastern European Jewries almost moot. This fact does not detract from the book's success, but it does call into question some of Rosenbaum's claims to Bay Area exceptionalism.¹

While it is a very fine work of history, I believe Rosenbaum has failed to address three important points in this book. First, *Cosmopolitans* synthesizes a wide array of earlier scholarship. The book, for example, reflects the significant efforts of Rabbi Bill Kramer and Norton Stern of Western States Jewish History. While Rosenbaum adequately cites his sources, some explicit acknowledgement of his scholarly predecessors' efforts and their contribution to Rosenbaum's own knowledge of Bay Area Jewry seems in order. Second, Rosenbaum is not always clear about the geographic boundaries of his study. Some of the figures he cites achieve their greatest importance outside of the Bay Area, and some contribute to Bay Area Jewish life after precious little time in the region. Here a more forceful argument about who and what is considered a product of the region would have strengthened his book. Finally, the book's regional focus notwithstanding, Rosenbaum makes almost no reference to Los Angeles Jewry. Throughout the 160-year history of Jewish life in the Golden State, there has always been a significant connection between the Jews of the City of Angels and their coreligionists to the north. One of the most significant figures in early twentieth century San Francisco Jewry, I.W. Hellman, began his California career in Los Angeles, and the most public face of Los Angeles Jewry for almost seventy years, Rabbi Edgar Magnin, was a product of the Bay Area. Such facts suggest the need for a more in-depth consideration of the ties between these two significant Jewish communities.

The above cited critiques aside, *Cosmopolitans* is an important work in a growing field of study and represents a significant contribution to our understanding of the history of the Bay Area and its Jewish community.

Notes

¹Hasia Diner, "American West, New York Jewish," in *Jewish Life in the American West: Perspectives on Migration, Settlement, and Community*, ed. Ava Kahn (Los Angeles: Autry Museum of Western Heritage in Association with University of Washington Press, 2002), 33–51. Also see Hasia Diner, "A Century of Migration, 1820–1924," in her *The Jews of the United States, 1654–2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), chapter 3.

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Marc Saperstein, *Jewish Preaching in Times of War, 1800–2001* (Portland, OR: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2008), 619 pp.

In this rich collection of nineteenth- and twentieth-century sermons, Marc Saperstein demonstrates both the enduring rhetorical power of Jewish preaching and the value of the sermon as window onto Jewish history. Saperstein presents readers with a compelling selection of English and North American sermons given in times of war. He argues persuasively that Jewish preachers often found themselves confronted with the challenge of interpreting difficult moral and political questions for their congregations but that these questions took on particular urgency in moments of military conflict, when political stakes grow higher and moral decisions more painful. In presenting these wartime sermons, Saperstein explores developments in the style and structure of Jewish preaching during the modern era, but he also uses the sermons to examine the nuances of Jews' attitudes toward their countries and governments and to reveal the significance of the state in shaping Jewish discourse.

Saperstein opens the book with a preface laying out the goals and methodology of his study, and he provides a useful introduction to the topic of modern Jewish preaching. After that, the book is broken down into seven sections, each one dealing with a particular conflict or period. The sermons chronicle rabbinic responses to the Napoleonic Wars, uprisings in India, the American Civil War, the Franco-Prussian War, the Spanish-American War, and the Boer War. There are separate sections for World Wars I and II, a brief section on Vietnam and the Falklands Crisis, and, finally, three sermons responding to the attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001.

Saperstein precedes each sermon with an introduction that provides biographical information about the preacher, the setting in which the sermon was given, and the specific events and circumstances to which the sermon responds. The author uses his introductions to set the sermons into their various historical and rhetorical contexts by pointing out similarities and differences among the texts and changes in the outlook of the speaker, or by connecting these sermons to others not included in this volume but relevant to understanding the text at hand. Each sermon is also carefully annotated to provide additional background or explanatory material and to offer useful references to secondary sources dealing with issues that arise within the sermons.

The introductions and footnotes not only define the immediate context of the sermon but also give insight into the preacher's dilemma as he or she prepared to speak on matters involving both national policy and profound human suffering. The sermons make the uncertainty and unpredictability of war clear. For contemporary readers it may seem obvious that Abraham Lincoln was a great president or that American Jews wished to enter the war against Nazi Germany, but the sermons included in Saperstein's volume reveal the preacher's difficulty

of discerning the path ahead or of knowing which course of action best served national and Jewish interests. They show, moreover, the preacher's struggle to interpret questions of slavery, colonial rebellion, or of Jew fighting against Jew in opposing armies, in light of Jewish principles and in a manner that would offer comfort, courage, or guidance to his or her congregation.

In reading though this provocative collection of British and American sermons there are times when one wishes for more. What, for example, did French Jewish preachers have to say about Napoleon and his wars? How did Prussian Jews interpret the events of the Franco-Prussian War? How did Russian rabbis address the events of World War I? Saperstein reasonably argues that, given the immense volume of possible source material available, he chose to survey Jewish preaching in English-speaking lands rather than to investigate different Jewish perspectives on any one conflict. That, he claims, would be work for a different book and further explorations of Jewish preaching in the modern era. Given the value of the material Saperstein presents here, one can only hope that other such studies will follow.

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