

Anny Bloch-Raymond, *Des berges du Rhin aux rives du Mississippi: Histoire et récits de migrants juifs* (Paris: Michel Houdiard Éditeur, 2009), 217 pp.

“Every night I pray for the Blacks because if there were no Blacks, they would be picking on Jews,” Metz Kahn’s grandfather used to say. (157) A resident of Baton Rouge, Kahn is a descendant of one of the Jewish families who fled the Rhine Valley in the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century to escape poverty and marginalization, finding their promised land on the banks of the Mississippi. Through interviews she conducted with their descendants, Anny Bloch-Raymond documents the acculturation of these immigrants from the east of France and the south of Germany over four generations. Ambitious and pragmatic, they adapted themselves to an environment that often proved hospitable to their faith, and they eagerly became “southern religious,” a particular brand of American Judaism. (72)

Mostly young, single men, these immigrants entered the United States through the port of New Orleans, second in importance to New York. From there, they typically first led the itinerant life of riverboat peddlers or junk dealers. They eventually settled in small towns along the bayous of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, where they owned and operated stores, selling hardware, dry goods, lumber, clothing, or dishes. Key figures of the local economy, they acted as intermediaries between the great merchants of New Orleans and the rural population of the Deep South. The most successful became planters, slaveowners, or industrialists, and some even gave their name to southern towns. A portion of them received their education in Catholic schools, entered mixed marriages, or converted to Protestantism. The majority, however, retained their Jewish heritage.

Dispersed along the Mississippi, the immigrants from the Rhine Valley took some time to organize their communities, build synagogues, and establish charitable associations. By then, they were already well engaged in a process of Americanization, eager to learn English and to affirm their patriotism and their loyalty to their new land. They served under the Confederate flag during the Civil War, rejected the early Zionist movement, and joined Masonic Lodges and women’s benevolent associations. Becoming Americans also meant reformulating their religion to embrace Reform Judaism. Surrounded by the culinary culture of the South, they took great liberties with dietary laws. Yet they were respectful of the commandments of *tzedakah* (charity) and were active community builders and charitable supporters of their coreligionists.

Strongly involved in their synagogues, the older generation interviewed by Bloch-Raymond understands Judaism primarily as an ethic and a culture.

In contrast, the younger generation—influenced by the recent immigration of thousands of Jews from the American Northeast—seems more Orthodox in their religious practice. In spite of great social, political, and economic achievements, concludes Bloch-Raymond, the Jewish population that settled along the Mississippi more than a century ago is still not firmly rooted in the South; the integration remains unfinished. Within the racial structure of the region, the place of the descendants of these Rhine Valley immigrants is more ambiguous than ever, as revealed by the current antisemitism of African-American leaders and white supremacists.

A contribution to the history of immigration, *Des berges du Rhin aux rives du Mississippi* leaves plenty of room for the voices of the immigrants and their descendants. Throughout the seven chapters, these individual narratives—drawn from memoirs, letters, and interviews—constitute the most interesting aspect of the study and will hopefully be made accessible to future researchers. Then again, if at the onset of the book the project appears promising, the end product turns out to be unfocused and fragmentary.

Working from the stance of the sociologist, most of Bloch-Raymond's discussion of the past is informed by the present. The New Orleans she describes is the one she visited, not the one that her subjects encountered a century ago. Perhaps too close to her informants, she accepts their testimonies at face value and scarcely confronts them with the historiography. Life on a sugar plantation, for instance, is portrayed here through the nostalgic eyes of the memorialist, not the brutal reality of slavery and industrial agriculture. Obviously charmed by the culture of the South, the author often digresses from her topic, discussing in much detail the current status of French in Louisiana or the origins of Creole cuisine. The book also suffers from poor editing. Spelling mistakes, typographical errors, and problematic uses of punctuation are countless throughout, most conspicuously on the back cover, picture captions, and even a chapter title. The subtitle "*L'invention de la cuisine casher créole*" is used twice in the same chapter. Several endnotes do not coincide with the information they are supposed to reference.

All these lacunas are symptomatic of a book that was not quite ready for publication. We must nonetheless credit Bloch-Raymond for giving a voice to several generations of Southern men and women too often excluded from the history of the region. In itself, this is a valuable contribution.

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Meaghan Dwyer-Ryan, Susan L. Porter, and Lisa Fagin Davis, *Becoming American Jews: Temple Israel of Boston* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2009), 259 pp.

Bad synagogue or church history—and there is plenty of it out there—has the unmistakable quality of home movies. Scenes that might induce warm, fuzzy feelings or incessant embarrassment among family members often elicit an involuntary yawn (or worse) from everyone else. As the title of the recently published history of Temple Israel in Boston suggests, its authors aspired to write a book that transcends the parochial interests of a single congregation. Here they have succeeded marvelously.

Conceived to mark the congregation's sesquicentennial in 2004, *Becoming American Jews: Temple Israel of Boston* might be forgiven for celebrating the achievements of Boston's second-oldest synagogue, the largest Jewish congregation in New England. It certainly does not lose an opportunity to trumpet the congregation's leading role in social justice causes or its commitment to outreach and liturgical innovation. Likewise, a nostalgic current runs through the scores of photographs and documents in the volume. But from the outset, the book makes the case that the story of temple members' efforts to "maintain the equilibrium between their desire to practice their faith and their determination to be accepted as Americans . . . is, in many ways, the narrative of American Reform Judaism in microcosm." (xii) Time and again, this case is made convincingly, whether the subject is the German congregants' nineteenth-century utilitarian embrace of ritual innovation and liturgical reform or the impact of interwar antisemitism on its rapprochement with Zionism.

*Becoming American Jews* is not the first history of Temple Israel that aspires to be more than a commemorative volume. In 1954, Arthur Mann published *Growth and Achievement: Temple Israel, 1854–1954*, which included contextual essays by noted scholars Bertram Korn and Moses Rischin, as well as by former American Jewish Historical Society president Lee Friedman. Mann himself wrote the four chapters at the heart of the volume, focusing on the careers of the temple's senior rabbis.

The authors of *Becoming American Jews* are very conscious of Mann's contribution. Indeed, they aspired to write a book that was as much the "anti-Mann," as it was a sequel. While Mann's volume placed the rabbis at the center of its inquiry, *Becoming American Jews* claims to be a social history that puts the congregants themselves in the spotlight. As such, the reader learns about the "ambitious entrepreneurs" in the 1880s whose exodus from the working-class South End to the stately brownstones of Back Bay and Roxbury coincided with a desire to replace their modest wooden *shul* with a magisterial "church like edifice." That building, on Columbus Avenue, blended the Romanesque revival architecture of Bavarian synagogues with Bostonian architectural flourishes like steeple towers. Likewise, the reader hears about efforts in the 1990s to keep a

large and increasingly diverse membership from becoming balkanized, even at the risk of alienating old timers, whose yearning for late Friday evening services and utilizing the mostly English *Union Prayer Book* ultimately went unrequited. Instead, the temple moved to a family-friendly, heavily Hebrew early-evening service, replacing the choir and organ with congregational singing to the tunes of the cantor's guitar.

Still, the new volume maintains a focus on the congregation's clergy, particularly its senior rabbis. The spotlight is inevitable, since the clergy team's imprint was, and is, felt in virtually every aspect of congregational life. Temple Israel's rabbis have generally been strong leaders, firm managers, and adroit politicians. This is not to say that the will of the lay leadership has not prevailed at critical junctures. Nevertheless, congregants have historically recognized that the prestige of their congregation was considerably enhanced by the reputations of its religious leaders. They actively sought rabbis whose visionary leadership and scholarship were matched by healthy egos, and they generally granted them freedom of the pulpit and a fairly wide latitude in ritual, liturgical, and educational policies and procedures. The reader will be thankful that *Becoming American Jews* provides compelling portraits of charismatic leaders such as Solomon Schindler and Joshua Loth Liebman, who seemed to embody the zeitgeist. Likewise, its extended treatment of the past half-century, most notably the juxtaposition of Rabbis Roland Gittelsohn and Bernard Mehlman, provides a useful case study of the evolving nature of the contemporary rabbinate.

One of the more interesting aspects of the book is its attention to synagogue architecture. In the authors' view, the procession of buildings that the congregation erected and inhabited over the course of its 150-year history were reflections of congregants' and clergy's evolving aspirations and self-perceptions. Sometimes, later generations found themselves hostage to the conceptions of earlier generations. As the authors skillfully explain, Gittelsohn's personal style—the moral crusader who was, nevertheless, a transcendent and remote presence on the pulpit—was transposed into the architectural and aesthetic style of the temple's sanctuary in its current location on Longwood Avenue. Mehlman, the “institutional humanizer” and “teaching rabbi,” spent the next twenty-two years spiritually at war with his physical surroundings. The authors also offer a laudably in-depth portrait of the synagogue's religious school and social action programs. Sadly, they afford only cursory attention to synagogue music in general, and the creative genius of longtime musical director and composer Herbert Fromm, in particular.

Dwyer-Ryan, Porter, and Davis deftly utilize gender and class as analytical lenses, although the reader sometimes wishes that they dug a little deeper. For example, they explore the profound impact of the synagogue's first female rabbi, Elaine Zecher, whose rabbinate has largely been devoted to spiritual engagement. Yet they neglect the fact that the most successful female rabbis at

Temple Israel have held pastoral and social action portfolios that might, fairly or unfairly, be pigeonholed as feminine. Likewise, when the senior rabbi retired in the late 1990s, the search committee did not include any women among its finalists. Coincidence? Perhaps. But consigning female rabbis to supporting roles is hardly anomalous within the Reform and Conservative movements and is thus a topic that is worthy of attention. The authors would have pushed the scholarly envelope had they at least raised the issue.

On the other hand, the book does not sugarcoat the temple's leadership controversies, including the rejection of Judaism for nonsectarian humanism by its freethinking, turn-of-the-century rabbi, Charles Fleischer. Indeed, the authors are to be commended for their forthright treatment of more recent challenges and minor scandals.

*Becoming American Jews* shines because its authors exude an affection and enthusiasm for their subject but seldom allow these feelings to overwhelm their narrative. They admirably balance the desire to celebrate a storied congregation with the goal of finding larger meaning in its history. This book sets the standard for future synagogue histories and should be required reading for all who embark on such an endeavor.

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Carol K. Ingall, ed., *The Women Who Reconstructed American Jewish Education, 1910–1965* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2010), xiv + 243 pp.

*The Women Who Reconstructed American Jewish Education, 1910–1965* is an important contribution to scholarship on Jewish education. This volume offers a fuller understanding of the leadership in the early- to mid-twentieth century by illuminating the work of leading women in a period that is traditionally understood to be shaped primarily by men such as Samson Benderly and Mordecai Kaplan. This volume details the life histories and contributions of eleven women who provided institutional and inspirational leadership in the arts, literature, community organizing, and schools.

In Ingall's illuminating introduction, she offers a helpful framework for understanding the contributions of these exemplary women. She argues that their commitment to Hebrew and their love of Israel and the richness of Jewish culture reflects the story of the Americanization of the Jews in the United States during this period. Some of the women, such as Ethel Feineman and Grace Weiner, sought to integrate the Jews in the United States through their social progressivism, as evident in the settlement houses they created. Others, like Jesse Sampter, worked to "Judaize" American Jews through building organizations

such as Hadassah, which would enhance members' Jewish identity and sense of community. Jonathan Krasner's chapter on Sadie Rose Wallerstein (author of the famous *K'tonton* children's books) is perhaps the strongest chapter in the volume in demonstrating Ingall's introductory thesis. In his chapter, he compellingly traces Wallerstein's evolution of *K'tonton* to reflect the changing position, views, and values of Jews in American society.

While progressive education, Jewish culturalism, and Hebraism were common philosophies among many of the women in this volume, they were also linked by key institutions such as the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. These physical places were laboratories for deepening their educational aspirations and building of community that would nurture the women's creativity. This notion of "place" as core is amply illustrated in Ingall's own chapters on Anna Sherman and her role in the Teachers Institute, and Tzipora Jochsberger, founder of the Hebrew Arts School.

This volume offers a substantial contribution to the scholarship of Jewish education by illustrating the ways in which these notable women changed the nature of Jewish education. As Ingall argues, "these women made a case for Jewish *education*, not merely Jewish *schooling*" (italics in original, p. 20). They took their understanding of progressive education and experiential learning and broke down the barriers between education in the classroom and the neighborhood, between academics and the arts, and between Hebrew instruction in isolation and Hebrew as a living language. The scholarship on progressive education in secular schooling during this period recognizes and highlights important women such as Caroline Pratt, Harriet Johnson, Elizabeth Irwin, and Lucy Sprague Mitchell, who took students into the streets of New York City to study geography, social studies, and ecology. Their vision of education created landmark progressive schools in New York that still thrive today. This volume helps the field of Jewish education similarly recognize the women who integrated theory and practice and who launched innovative educational models upon which we continue to build.

As a feminist qualitative researcher, I paid close attention to the methodologies the writers of these chapters employed, and this is the one area of the volume that falls a bit short. In general, the methodologies are not fully spelled out, and some chapters are constructed more like encyclopedia entries than analytic essays. In two cases, the authors describe using "portraiture," a methodology developed by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, an eminent sociologist at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. As a result, I was hopeful that these chapters would demonstrate a creative analysis of the data the authors collected, but they did not quite meet the criteria of portraiture Lawrence-Lightfoot set out. Missing was the "thick description" that would yield a new vantage point through which we can understand the women more deeply. Interestingly, each chapter in this volume begins with an actual photographic portrait of the women, helping the

reader “see” the protagonists more fully. It would have been more compelling to have equally vibrant narrative portraits across the board.

Despite some methodological shortcomings, the book stands as an important contribution to the history of Jewish education in the United States. In particular, the biographies help to render a fuller picture of Jewish education as a field by examining the major contributions of significant women who were teachers, artists, writers, community activists, and organizational leaders. To understand this vital period in American Jewish history—about which so many volumes have been devoted to the Benderly boys and their disciples—it is essential we hear the voices of the creative and productive women of these decades. Ingall’s volume has amplified those voices for all to hear.

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**Noam Pianko, *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken: Rawidowicz, Kaplan, Kohn* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), 277 pp.**

*Zionism and the Roads Not Taken*, based on the author’s dissertation at Yale University (2004), is a timely and ambitious attempt to unearth approaches to Zionism that sought to embrace the concept of Jewish nationhood outside of the purely statist model. While Pianko engages a number of thinkers throughout the work, he devotes particular attention to three figures—Simon Rawidowicz, Mordecai Kaplan, and Hans Kohn—with overlapping yet different ideas about Jewish nationhood in an age that was increasingly defining national life and legitimacy through national sovereignty. The study’s “narrative arc,” Pianko informs us, “bridges time and space to trace the ways in which Rawidowicz, Kaplan and Kohn joined Jewish and non-Jewish thinkers committed to reimagining the fundamental categories of nationality between World War I and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.” (4)

Pianko emphasizes that while these thinkers who conceived of “nation beyond state” became marginalized in the dominant narrative of Jewish nationalism, they were by no means marginal figures in their own time. (8) They were actively involved in Jewish institutions and published their work in mainstream Jewish periodicals such as the *Menorah Journal*. This is a testament to the fluidity of interwar conceptions of national identity, both Jewish and non-Jewish. The second chapter (“Sovereignty Is International Anarchy”) is devoted to the further development of this context. Pianko explores the varying approaches

of Horace Kallen, Simon Dubnow, Alfred Zimmern, and Israel Friedlaender toward the question of Jewish national existence to demonstrate the diversity of opinion that accompanied debates about sovereignty, the widespread concern about joining national identity to Palestine, and (especially in the case of Kallen) the need to negotiate Jewish national identity in an American Progressive Era context that increasingly privileged the melting-pot model.

Pianko is at his best when offering highly interesting, contextual analyses of Rawidowicz's, Kaplan's, and Kohn's struggles with Jewish national identity. In analyzing Rawidowicz's "Global Hebraism," Pianko begins with a fascinating excerpt from Rawidowicz's correspondence with David Ben Gurion, in which he protests that naming the new Jewish state "Israel" threatened to reduce the term to "a geographical-political term, devoid of Jewish identity." (61) This episode reflects the concerns that led Rawidowicz to develop his theory of Jewish nationalism presented in his tome *Babylon and Jerusalem*. Pianko emphasizes that in contrast to both Ahad ha'am's "center-periphery model," and Simon Dubnow's "Diasporism," Rawidowicz did not seek to affirm either the Diaspora (Babylon) or the land of Israel (Jerusalem) at the expense of the other (71–73). Also of great interest is Rawidowicz's appropriation of the laws of *Eruvin*. By interpreting the concept of *eruv* as a way to assimilate outside ideas into the Jewish context while avoiding fatal levels of cultural absorption, Jews (and presumably other minority groups) could affirm the "right to difference" while remaining loyal and engaged members of American society at large (78–80). Rawidowicz also used his advocacy of minority rights within the nation state to challenge Israel's marginalization of Arabs. The fact that this chapter went unpublished is a sign, in Pianko's view, that by the 1950s such criticism was already a "communal taboo." (181)

While most readers will already be familiar with Mordecai Kaplan as the author of *Judaism as Civilization* and the father of the Reconstructionist movement, Pianko reveals a less-known side of Kaplan. Kaplan's primary task, according to Pianko, was not to make Judaism compatible with America, but to make "U.S. democracy safe for minority groups in general and for Jews in particular." (105) Like Rawidowicz, Kaplan had grave concerns that, in the America of the 1930s, the "melting pot" ideal would result in the smelting of national and religious minorities into a single national-religious identity. Pianko emphasizes Kaplan's belief that, "without halting this excessive trend in American nationalism . . . no religious reform or theological innovation would be able to rescue Judaism." (107) This concern with rescuing Judaism led Kaplan to a surprising array of solutions—not the least among them his suggestion of reviving the premodern corporatist model within the context of a transformed multicultural American society. (123) Like Rawidowicz, Kaplan, who, especially in his public declarations, was an ardent Zionist, felt a deep

sense of conflict over the treatment of Arab minorities in Palestine. This is due, in part, to Kaplan's conviction that Zionism was to serve as an exemplar of national civilization defined outside of the sovereign model. (129) Pianko shows that as developments in the Yishuv and the State of Israel moved steadily away from this ideal, Kaplan held similar concerns regarding the Jewish state to those he had about American society.

Unlike Rawidowicz and Kaplan, Hans Kohn's legacy is based more on his role as a scholar of comparative nationalism than on his Jewish contributions. Though Pianko may overstate, in his final chapter, the continued centrality of specifically Jewish concerns in Kohn's later thought, he rightly emphasizes the importance of Kohn's early writings on Zionism. Further, he presents a compelling case for continuity between his idealization of Zionism and his later belief in the promise of America. According to Pianko, "Kohn would resurrect a generalized version of his understanding of Zionism's political mission as the idea of nationalism, with American Nationalism embodying the former role of Zionism." (158) While Kohn upheld the desirability of the "melting pot" against Horace Kallen's critique, the author argues convincingly that Kohn's vision of American nationalism as "unity through multiplicity" was far closer to Kallen's ideal than Kohn wanted to admit—or could admit, in the immediate aftermath of the McCarthy era (169–170). Finally, Pianko does a fine job of challenging the characterization of Kohn's theory of nationalism as a "dichotomy" between Western "civic" and Eastern "ethnic" orientations. Rather, he asserts, "if Kohn's legacy is connected to a dichotomy, it should be one that differentiates between counterstate and statist conceptions." (176)

Pianko's final chapter diverges from the focus on intellectual history that characterizes the rest of the book. Here he presents an essay that relates these primarily interwar debates to contemporary concerns. It is likely that many of these theorists will remain the concern of Jewish academics and, as Pianko anticipates, those interested in ethnic and Diaspora studies. Yet Pianko's final chapter, and the book as a whole, is highly successful in both historicizing these theorists and using their thought to challenge and contextualize the contemporary disjunction between Jews as "nation" in the sovereign state and as "religion" in the Diaspora.

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Leonard Rogoff, *Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 432 pp. Illus.; Bryan Edward Stone, *The Chosen Folks: The Jews on the Frontiers of Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 294 pp. Illus.

The books under review provide two models for the writing of state Jewish histories.<sup>1</sup> Leonard Rogoff provides a comprehensive, analytically nuanced account of Jewish life in North Carolina. Bryan Edward Stone concentrates on the frontier framework to tease out the uses and transformations of diverse identities among Jews in selected episodes of Texas history. Jonathan D. Sarna does not exaggerate when he notes in a book cover blurb, “*Down Home* is the best and most comprehensive history of Jews in any one of the fifty states.” For its part, *The Chosen Folks* stands with Stephen J. Whitfield’s pivotal essay and two previous works by Rogoff<sup>2</sup> as one of the most in-depth and outstanding studies concerning regional identity. Similarities and differences between Rogoff’s and Stone’s volumes abound.

Two illustrated chronicles and a more analytic anthology, besides a plethora of other studies, have previously appeared on Texas history.<sup>3</sup> In his publication, Stone, an associate professor at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi, Texas, has dramatically revised his dissertation from the University of Texas at Austin. Rogoff is historian of the Jewish Heritage Foundation of North Carolina. His book is part of a larger project documenting and disseminating information on North Carolina Jewish history through a traveling exhibit, video, and school curriculum. As such, it joins Theodore Rosengarten and Dale Rosengarten’s *A Portion of a People*<sup>4</sup> as exemplars of what state historical associations are capable of producing.<sup>5</sup> Solid historical accounts of North Carolina Jewry are sparse and only one article—also by Rogoff—is statewide in scope.<sup>6</sup>

Both authors succeed as iconoclasts. Stone questions converso and crypto-Jewish settlement in the colonial origins of the Lone Star State and argues against the Jewish connections of nineteenth-century pioneers that previous historians have claimed. Yet his more sweeping challenge is to those historians who place New York City as the model and only truly legitimate center of the American Jewish experience. His frontier approach suggests instead the legitimacy and significance of Jewish life in all forms and environs as well as the necessity of studying these for the lessons they offer beyond New York’s hegemony. Stone adds depth to our knowledge and understanding of the roles of Jews during the Civil Rights era, which are reinforced in Rogoff’s book.

Rogoff also attacks myths of early Jewish settlement as a prelude, in his case, to opposing the distinctiveness school of Southern Jewish historiography. Cosmopolitanism rather than provincialism characterized even those North Carolina Jews who resided in small towns. These Jews, although living in a rural state, are urban in their perceptions, contacts, and experiences. Rather than conforming and “not calling attention to themselves,” (188) they actively

challenge prevailing norms and institutions. Although he pays homage to Jewish roots in *passim*, Rogoff's North Carolina Jewish history reflects constant and repeated incoming and outgoing migrations. Jews start businesses in small towns to accumulate capital to move to cities with larger Jewish communities and to educate their children to become professionals and move away. Their roots are to family, business, and religion rather than to region. New Jewish migrants rejuvenate and replenish Jewish communities and institutions regularly. Some Jewish communities die out, while others are reborn or born anew. In each of these themes, Rogoff replaces the nostalgic view with messages of vibrancy and realism. Finally, following the wave of research of the last fifteen years to which he has contributed—along with Wendy Besmann, Deborah R. Weiner, and Lee Shai Weissbach, among others—Rogoff brings the history of East European Jews to the forefront of Southern Jewish history. (Stone provides evidence of Zionism and vibrant East European Jewish communities, institutions, and culture as well but not as a primary theme.)

Although the authors do not always draw the same conclusions, the histories of North Carolina and Texas Jewry are remarkably—although not surprisingly—similar. Rogoff clearly could have used Stone's frontier framework to guide his work. Individual Jews could claim pioneer status in each, but substantial congregation- and institution-building did not thrive until the post-Civil-War era. Both states attracted Jews from the German states and other parts of Europe who had first lived elsewhere in the United States. Jews were few and far between, although Texas had more urban enclaves. Following the familiar patterns of nineteenth-century chain migrations, movement from town to town along transportation corridors, and from peddler to dry goods storekeeper to department store owner, these Jews adapted and compromised their Jewish practices.

Stone touches upon other themes upon which Rogoff elaborates. In both locations, Jewish acceptance was predicated on Jews' behavior and contributions to society. Yet Stone draws a picture almost devoid of antisemitism until after World War I, while Rogoff's North Carolinian Jews are more tolerated than accepted. Jews in Texas and North Carolina strive for urban, middle-class respectability and generally align with business-progressive politics and politicians. Challenging prevailing historiography, apparently few Jews in either place owned slaves. In hub-and-spoke or center-and-periphery fashion, Jews in both states maintained close ties with major Jewish centers—Baltimore, Charleston, New Orleans, and Richmond—outside of their states. This served as one of many mechanisms in which these Jews retained ties to national and international Jewry and overcame their relative physical isolation. Isaac Leeser and Isaac M. Wise sparked the formation of congregations, but the actions of a key local leader proved essential. The small Jewish population also led to other survival mechanisms. Reform scions of earlier immigrants and traditional

East European Jews tended to cooperate and compromise out of necessity. The North Carolina Association of Jewish Women, which fostered men's, youth, and rabbinic counterparts, and the Kallah of Texas Rabbis represented the need for statewide organizations that would have been established in cities with larger Jewish populations. Bringing the parallels forward, World War II and, more recently, the Sunbelt phenomenon brought tremendous growth and change to both.

My qualms with *Down Home* are minor. Although the case can and should be made for Southern Jewish distinctiveness in several areas, the celebration of Christmas by Classical Reform Jews (143–144), Americanizing names (141), and holding social events and using organizations beyond local communities to bring Jewish youth together (272–273) were national phenomena and not manifestations of “southern blending.” (272–273) Compromises between East European Orthodox and “German” Reform Jews and lesser division between the two was not the result of “a blended southern Jewish ethnicity” (271) but rather behaviors that typified intragroup relations in small towns everywhere, as Rogoff acknowledges on the following page. But these are isolated statements. Most of this book attacks exaggerated claims of regional distinctiveness.

I will note a few of the difficulties with Stone's volume that are more extensive and substantive. First, although his use of the frontier framework is appealing on many levels, the definition and application of it become somewhat nebulous and problematic. Drawing on the theories of Sander Gilman, Kerwin Lee Klein, and Gloria Anzaldúa, among others, Stone's “frontier” appears as “an imagined space of cultural interaction where differences collide, groups encounter one another, and cultural boundaries must be devised and continually revised.” (237) Since Jews interact with others and are defined by and define themselves in relation to those others (including Jews elsewhere), Jews throughout the world and throughout history can thus all be categorized as frontier people. (14–15) Yet Texas Jews also defined themselves as frontier people with their imagery of participation in the beginnings of Texas history, when it was a frontier in the more traditional sense. Sometimes “frontier” seems to equate with living in isolation in relation to larger Jewish communities. Defining Jews in contemporary Sunbelt cities as frontier people further strains the credibility of the term. (234) Stone does the latter by juxtaposing Sunbelt Texas with Los Angeles and Miami as the appropriate comparisons and continuing the imagery of the Texas Jewish frontier by asking why more Jews have not been attracted to the state. Yet the comparison to North Carolina, where Rogoff draws a more complete picture of Sunbelt effect, and other Sunbelt states may be equally appropriate; and the issue may not be the negatives Stone associates with the Lone Star State but rather the unique attractions of Los Angeles and Miami. Further questions arise over interpretation. Stone views the rise of the modern Ku Klux Klan as a turning point where Texas Jews confront bigotry

and outsider status seemingly for the first time. (136–146) Was there virtually no antisemitism earlier, especially during the late nineteenth century? Stone notes only briefly exclusion from country clubs, and he puts it during a much later era. (203) For a final example, Stone discusses the relatively small number of East European Orthodox Jews in Texas and implies the population dominance of the “German” Reform element until the 1920s at the earliest. Yet the approximately 3,300 Jews in Texas in 1880 had multiplied to 16,000 by 1905, and the numbers double between 1910 and 1920. (64, 95, 154) It would be unusual and unlikely if these increases were not largely the result of a major East European influx relative to the earlier settlers. Indeed, Stone provides evidence of vibrant East European Jewish communities dating from the 1880s. This goes beyond demographic quibbling. Earlier demographic dominance of East European traditionalists raises questions concerning some of the broader generalizations relating to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century identity. Were the newcomers accepted as Anglos, and did they accept their position as such so quickly and easily? Last, Rogoff emphasizes nineteenth-century ties with Germany, German culture, and Lutheran Germans in North Carolina. (89, 142) One wonders why the study of Jewish, Texas, Southern, Western, and American identities failed to extend to German identity and interaction with the large and important gentile German population in Texas as well.

Regardless of these issues, Stone and especially Rogoff are to be commended for outstanding, thought-provoking books based on extensive archival research. They take historiography to the next level of debate, and their interpretive insights lay the groundwork for future studies. The illustrations in both enhance the stories as do, in *Down Home*, insightful sidebars. Anyone interested in regional and national history should read these books.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>For the sake of transparency, I served as a press peer reviewer for *The Chosen Folks* and have worked as editor with both authors in other publications.

<sup>2</sup>Stephen J. Whitfield, “The Braided Identity of Southern Jewry,” in *Dixie Diaspora: An Anthology of Southern Jewish History*, ed. Mark K. Bauman (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2006), 427–451; Leonard Rogoff, *Homelands: Southern Jewish Identity in Durham and Chapel Hill* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2001); idem, “Harry Golden: New Yorker,” *Southern Jewish History* 11 (2008): 41–64.

<sup>3</sup>Natalie Ornish, *Pioneer Jewish Texans* (Dallas: Texas Heritage Press, 1989); Ruthe Winegarten and Cathy Schechter, *Deep in the Heart: The Lives and Legends of Texas Jews, a Photographic History* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1990); Ava Hollace Weiner and Kenneth D. Roseman, eds., *Lone Stars of David* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2007).

<sup>4</sup>Theodore Rosengarten and Dale Rosengarten, eds., *A Portion of a People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2002).

<sup>5</sup>The Jewish Museum of Maryland is also noteworthy for the excellent volumes it produces, although it has not commissioned a comprehensive state history. See, for example, Karen Falk and Avi Decter, eds., *We Call This Place Home: Jewish Life in Maryland's Small Towns* (Baltimore: Jewish Museum of Maryland, 2002).

<sup>6</sup>Rogoff, "Synagogue and Jewish Church: A Congregational History of North Carolina," *Southern Jewish History* 1 (1989): 43–81.

Susan G. Solomon, *Louis I. Kahn's Jewish Architecture: Mikveh Israel and the Midcentury American Synagogue* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press; Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2009), 215 pp.

This book is a ghost story, told about a structure that never existed. Susan G. Solomon argues that Louis I. Kahn's designs for Philadelphia's Congregation Mikveh Israel (1961–1972) represented a zenith in postwar synagogue architecture. Regrettably, however, none of Kahn's six schemes for a complex of structures facing Independence Mall was ever built, so their quality and influence cannot be properly measured. Although the book's subject is Kahn's "Jewish architecture," the author says almost nothing about his design of Temple Beth-El (1966–1972) in Chappaqua, New York, which was erected.

As one of America's most distinguished postwar architects, Kahn (1901–1974) has enjoyed enduring renown for masterworks such as the Yale University Art Gallery (1951–1953), the Salk Institute for Biological Sciences (1959–1965) in La Jolla, the Indian Institute of Management (1962–1974) in Ahmedabad, and the Kimbell Art Museum (1966–1972) in Fort Worth. Solomon's previous studies include an insightful monograph on his bathhouse for a Jewish Community Center (1954–1959) near Trenton, which, she claims, was a turning point in his later career.

As the author indicates, Kahn's Unitarian Church (1959–1969) in Rochester, New York, was highly evocative, but many of his best secular buildings also achieved a spiritual depth and majesty. The book leaves some lingering questions about its subject. Kahn was nearly a lifelong resident of Philadelphia who had only a meager knowledge of Judaism and did not affiliate with Jewish institutions (though he did visit Israel on many occasions). Thus, it is extremely difficult to understand what Judaism may have meant to Kahn. Additionally, Solomon too easily dismisses the fact that, while married, he fathered two children with two other women.

As a seeker of architectural truth, Kahn continually searched for essential meanings of space, form, light, materials, and sequential movement. Ironically, his lengthy struggles with Mikveh Israel's insensitive and ineffective leadership produced a succession of challenging (and misinformed) interpretations of Jewish

prayer and celebration. Ultimately, Kahn was dismissed from the commission; the mundane structure completed in 1976 gave equal importance to a sanctuary and a museum of American Jewish history, but it did justice to neither. Alas, the new National Museum of American Jewish History, dedicated in November 2010, has partially arisen from the ashes of Kahn's defeat. But he will surely be lionized within it!

Solomon has much to say about Jewish and gentile synagogue architects of the postwar decades, particularly those active in the Northeast, but her devotion to Kahn obscures an important point. Frank Lloyd Wright's design of Beth Sholom synagogue, erected in suburban Philadelphia in 1959, was probably modernism's most astonishing Jewish house of worship. Although Wright worked on a monumental scale and Kahn on a more intimate one, both architects sought an archetypal sense of drama and transcendence for their synagogues. Despite their clients' requests, neither architect had much interest in glorifying patriotic themes or employing traditional Jewish symbols.

It was unnecessary for Solomon to try to magnify Kahn's brilliance by diminishing some of his American contemporaries. Minoru Yamasaki, perhaps best known today for his demolished World Trade Center in Manhattan, created an allusive yet enthralling sanctuary for North Shore Temple Israel in Glencoe, Illinois, which was built in 1964. Percival Goodman was the most prolific synagogue designer in Jewish history. He was a much more successful businessman and technician than Kahn, and he too earned the respect and loyalty of many clients. Although Kahn was the far greater architect, Goodman was also an idealist and seldom repeated himself. Goodman, moreover, was in some sense aware of his own limitations, for he offered numerous commissions for sculptures, paintings, and textiles to leading avant-garde artists who could balance representation and abstraction. The Jewish Museum's recent exhibition of art by Adolph Gottlieb, Herbert Ferber, and Richard Diebenkorn, commissioned in 1951 for Congregation Beth El in Millburn, New Jersey, demonstrates the daring and fruitfulness of Goodman's vision.

Solomon's book ends on a false note of despair. American synagogue architecture and congregational life have not suffered an irreversible decline following Kahn's calamitous experience with Mikveh Israel. By their very nature, most buildings of any genre, style, or era are utterly forgettable. But Samuel Gruber's recent book on twentieth-century American synagogue architecture suggests that several fine examples have been constructed throughout the country since Kahn's death. Norman Jaffe's stunning Gates of the Grove Synagogue (1989), in East Hampton, New York, is one of my favorites.

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Melvin I. Urofsky, *Louis D. Brandeis: A Life* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2009), 953 pp.

This impressive study of nearly a thousand pages is the capstone of Urofsky's engrossment with the life of Louis D. Brandeis (1856–1941). It is a remarkable undertaking that builds upon his earlier studies. The task required considering the vast body of work published during the long interim. Urofsky successfully covers Brandeis's career as a lawyer and public advocate and his long and influential tenure as Supreme Court Justice; he is, however, somewhat less convincing in dealing with Brandeis the Zionist. (Most of the chapters that discuss Zionism are titled "Extra-Judicial Activities, I, II, and III.") The otherwise impressive list of primary sources misses, e.g., the deposit of the Combined Jewish Philanthropists of Boston, the archives of Brandeis's law firm (now Nutter, McClennen & Fish), as well as some relevant Yishuv and Israeli archives. Also, perhaps because of the time that has lapsed, oral history is scant.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Brandeis's Boston was a major immigrant-absorbing city characterized by a web of ethnic neighborhoods and institutions. For Brandeis, this resulted in his increasing awareness and response to Boston's Jews and the Jewish communal institutions nationwide, a development Urofsky fails to deal with in any depth. Urofsky, moreover, neglects the philosemitism (old and new) that characterized influential Yankee circles. While Urofsky discusses antisemitism extensively (though without illuminating the subtle nature of *social* antisemitism), his overlooking philosemitism and the changing sociopolitical character of the Jewish community prevents him from fully explaining Brandeis's gravitation to Zionism. Indeed, in essence, Brandeis was attracted rather than pushed to Zionism. The works of an array of scholars—Barbara Solomon, Oscar Handlin, Arthur Goren, James Connolly, Lawrence H. Fuchs, Stephen J. Whitfield, as well as scholars in the excellent *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*—who have produced major studies discussing ethnic identity, American nationality, cultural diversity, and other pertinent themes are not productively utilized in the new volume; and see my "The Enigma of Louis Brandeis's 'Zionization'" in *American Public Life and the Historical Imagination*, edited by W. Gamber et al.

In this pluralistic milieu, the brilliant, broad-minded, intellectual, conscientious Brandeis—a "non-Jewish Jew" (until 1905)—developed a sensitivity to personal and public issues of identity. Yet Urofsky does not meaningfully benefit from pertinent works of Jonathan D. Sarna and the late Ben Halpern, in which the historians sensitively trace Brandeis's roots back to a Jewish Messianic sect in Europe and illuminate the innerconnection between his evolving Jewishness—permeated by *tikkun olam* (repairing the world)—and the kind of Zionism he later developed. Halpern further analyzes the influence of the Palestinian murderous attacks of 1929 and again of 1936–1939, of the rise of

antisemitism and Nazism in the 1920s and early 1930s, and of Britain's betrayal of the Mandate on Brandeis's Zionism, leading it to become more assertive and nationalist. Indeed, Brandeis's initial view of a universal, mission-oriented Zionism gradually came to conceive the very existence of the Yishuv as a vital, sublime goal unto itself.

Urofsky, inattentive to Brandeis's deepening commitment to Zionism, consequently does not discuss the meaningful and mutually respecting relations that developed between him and David Ben-Gurion, a theme covered in some historically perceptive publications. Nor does he delve into the Britain-oriented compromising policy of Chaim Weizmann that, among other factors, nourished the understanding between Brandeis and Ben-Gurion.

Brandeis's extended family in Europe included Reform Jews; Urofsky should have discussed the possible impact that background had on Brandeis's mind and on his openness to the Reform movement of his own time, which emphasized social values. Brandeis's first comprehensive Zionist lecture—"The Jewish Problem: How to Solve It"—was given at the Eastern Council of Reform Rabbis; instructively, Brandeis's inner circle prominently included Stephen S. Wise, an eminent Reform rabbi and pursuer of social justice.

Furthermore, Urofsky's conclusion that Brandeis's success in making Zionism a force to be politically reckoned with is mainly the result of his secular leadership (755) is quite rigid. It seems that other contributions Brandeis made, which Urofsky aptly detailed (chapter seventeen), were more important—especially the synthesis of Zionism and Americanism and the emphasis on the philanthropic, Eretz-Israel-oriented function of American Zionism. Brandeis's secularism was never set as a pattern for American Zionism to follow. And not only were religious personalities such as Wise and Julian Mack at the heart of the "Brandeis group," but he also forged a grand alliance with Hadassah and Henrietta Szold, an esteemed religious personality. Solomon Goldman, a Conservative rabbi and president of the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) (1938–1940), was an admirer of Brandeis (and Ben-Gurion) and energetically disseminated Brandeis's Zionist writings. In general, Brandeis's Zionist course and legacy have been cherished by religious (less so the small Orthodox movement) and non-religious alike.

Urofsky indicates that Zionism was closer to Brandeis's heart than any of his other causes (409). This observation ties into my broader explanation of his Zionism as a response, in part, to an identity issue. This is, by the way, also why Brandeis did not distinguish between Judaism and Zionism and employed the terms interchangeably.

Urofsky's important book is rather comprehensive. However, it is missing a subtle analysis of American pluralism and of Brandeis's Zionist heritage that developed in this context.

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**Lewis L. Zickel, *The Jews of West Point in the Long Gray Line* (Jersey City, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 2009), 321 pp.**

In 1802, Thomas Jefferson established the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York (site of the Revolutionary-Era fort that Benedict Arnold offered to betray to the British) with a mandate to train military officers who would be faithful to republican ideals. Over the next century, West Point became the pre-eminent institution for educating Americans who aspired to serve as officers in a democratic society. For some American Jews, West Point occupies a special place in their affections, for Jews have been intimately associated with it since its founding. Indeed, at least one American Jew was in the inaugural class.

Lewis Zickel was one of those American Jews whose life is entwined with what West Point alumni call “the Long Grey Line”—a reference to the traditional uniforms of the cadets. Zickel, West Point class of 1949, channeled his passion for his alma mater into an account about the relationship of American Jews with West Point, and in the course of his study he provides numerous digressions into the meaning of military service to American Jewry. Since the French and American revolutions, military service has been the ultimate test of citizenship, and Zickel wanted to demonstrate that since the founding of the American Republic, American Jews have participated in the service of arms.

The book is divided into three parts: Part one is a history of Jews and the academy; part two is Zickel’s autobiographical account with an emphasis on his motivations to serve and his military career; and part three contains short sketches of other Jewish graduates and their relationship with the academy.

While Zickel’s recounting of the history of American Jewry and West Point begins strongly by integrating the history of the institution with the American Jewish experience—pointing out, for example, that there never was a religious test required for entry—the story quickly gets bogged down. Zickel’s priority seems to be to remind his readers of the Jewish contribution to military affairs, reflecting perhaps a need to defend Jews against charges that they were not fully American. In addition, Zickel’s narration passes much too quickly through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in order to incorporate his own story into the chapter. The final result is disappointing, as the author does not provide any new information on the Jewish experience at West Point; meanwhile, his

analysis of the antisemitic accusations about Jews shirking military service, and the Jewish response, also does not cover any new ground.

The autobiographical section will interest historians whose focus is the integration of immigrants and their children into mainstream American life via military service. As with every generation and immigrant group, the path to acculturation into American society can be found in endeavors such as sports, business, or the military. One has only to look at class photos and the names of the cadets of West Point in the last hundred years to see which immigrant group, and their descendants, are becoming fully American. Zickel's story is an exemplar of that journey and, as such, provides some useful insight for the reader. As with the previous chapter, Zickel attempts to confront the question of anti-Jewish bigotry at the academy and in the military. The major issue in this section, as with the previous, is that he seems to argue simultaneously for its being present and its insignificance.

Part three is based on a questionnaire Zickel sent to every Jewish alumnus of the Long Grey Line that he could identify. The results of this survey contain the kind of material that is bane and boon to the historian. As published, the information contains anecdotal evidence that can be mined usefully for a variety of attitudes toward the academy, the military, and America. The chapter does not, however, provide any systematic evidence from which the historian can draw general conclusions. While Zickel did include a sample copy of a finished questionnaire, he does not adequately explain what methodology he used to extract information for inclusion.

Sadly, Lewis Zickel died before publication, and while the professional historian will have quibbles with his text, methodology, and format, it does provide insight into the experiences of a man who was always proud to be an alumnus of America's oldest, and arguably most prestigious, military academy.

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