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Articles

The Travails of Early Jewish Theological Seminary Graduates: Solomon Schechter’s Disciples and the Challenges of the Emergent Conservative Movement, 1902–1913

Michael R. Cohen
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This essay examines the Conservative movement in the years before it coalesced, analyzing the experiences of four early graduates of the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS). Their range of experiences demonstrate that the porous boundaries between the American Jewish movements, coupled with the lack of a congregational constituency for the emerging Conservative movement, posed significant challenges to early JTS graduates. Their struggles also shed light on the challenges faced by new and emergent American religious movements, including the factors that determine whether their first-generation clergy will succeed or fail.

Germanness and Jewishness: Samuel Untermyer, Felix Warburg, and National Socialism, 1914–1938

Gregory Kupsky
pp. 24–42

Samuel Untermyer and Felix Warburg were prominent in both German-American and Jewish-American circles in New York in the early twentieth century. Their social positions became increasingly problematic when Nazi Germany began its campaign to destroy German Jewry. This article shows that Untermyer and Warburg responded differently to the Third Reich but that their German affinities continued to inform their actions as Jewish leaders. Their stories also demonstrate the ways that events of the 1930s undermined elite leadership styles.
Barnet Hodes’s Quest to Remember Haym Salomon, the Almost-Forgotten Jewish Patriot of the American Revolution

Christopher J. Young

On 15 December 1941, the George Washington–Robert Morris–Haym Salomon monument was dedicated in downtown Chicago. The dedication was a culmination of the efforts of Barnet Hodes, the legal counsel for the city of Chicago. From the time he was a boy, it was Hodes’s dream to memorialize Salomon, his hero from the American Revolutionary War. At a time of rising antisemitism at home and abroad, Hodes and his associates in the Patriotic Foundation of Chicago hoped the monument would serve as an antidote to prejudice in American life. By featuring the Jewish hero of the American Revolution as a symbol of minority participation on a monument celebrating American values of ethnic diversity and military-civilian cooperation, Hodes’s dream was ultimately realized in Chicago.

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Washington-Morris-Salomon Memorial. See page 43.
(Courtesy Michael Ball, Initiate Marketing, Inc.)
The pendulum of historiography has been swinging back to the study of the political and cultural elite of American society. After several decades of the primacy of social history—history, as Jacob Rader Marcus often said, from the “bottom up,” the story of the masses and of the working people—the study of communal leadership in all its forms has been reincorporated in a substantial way. Historians are focusing more attention on how various societal groups interact and intersect at different times and in different spaces.\(^1\) Dr. Marcus’s wisdom, as I have come to learn over the years, was in preserving and studying the documentary records of both American Jewish leaders and their constituents and making them readily accessible for future generations.

Even though Dr. Marcus was a vocal advocate for the study of social history—the “realia of Jewish life”\(^2\)—he still devoted significant attention in his own scholarship to the study of leading figures in eighteenth and nineteenth century Jewish history, such as Israel Jacobson, Gershom Seixas, and Isaac Mayer Wise. Moreover, he would likely bemoan the fact that scholarship on the history of organizational leadership in the post-World-War-II American Jewish community has been far too limited. Aside from simply documenting the past, scholarship on previous generations of Jewish leadership might offer guidance to the current community. As the late John W. Gardner (1912–2002)—former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare under President Lyndon Johnson—wrote in his 1990 volume, *On Leadership*:

> Leaders today, at whatever level, in whatever segment of society, live with the reality of unceasing change. They cannot prevent it, they can only hope to channel it in such a way as to preserve values and other essential continuities. And they cannot do that unless they understand the larger framework in which change is occurring, and unless they know their own history. They cannot know what they want to preserve against the buffeting of change or what sources of strength they can draw on to channel change, unless they know that path already traveled.\(^3\)

As far as the American Jewish experience is concerned, the first half of the twentieth century was arguably dominated by an impressive array of charismatic leaders such as Jacob Schiff, Louis Marshall, Hannah G. Solomon, and Henrietta Szold, who led the American Jewish community with passion and understanding since unmatched.\(^4\) Thirty Years ago, Melvin Urofsky argued that the apparent divisions that plagued leaders of that era—downtown versus uptown, German versus East European, Zionist versus anti-Zionist, and accommodation versus confrontation—were much more clear-cut than those today. Urofsky noted that they have been replaced by a more complex series of communal relations, thereby rendering leadership in the style of Wise and Marshall ineffective. The
articles featured in this latest issue of our journal offer us food for thought and push us to revisit Urofsky’s thoughtful assessment.5

The nature of leadership, the various forms it can take—particularly in the American Jewish community—and the ways in which historical forces influence it lie at the heart of the three articles in this volume of The American Jewish Archives Journal. In the first piece, Michael Cohen explores religious leadership through his examination of the careers of four early ordainees of the Jewish Theological Seminary, which reorganized under Solomon Schechter in 1902. While all four were trained to be congregational leaders, some were more successful in this setting than others. As Cohen writes: “In the vast majority of cases, a rabbi faced a significant amount of congregational resistance, as lay control, generational conflict, and congregational ambivalence made it particularly difficult for him to shape the congregation as he might have liked.” Clearly, the circumstances of a given situation rendered certain types and tools of leadership impotent. When the vision of a leader, in this case a rabbi, was not compatible with that of his followers, he may have needed to look elsewhere for a different leadership opportunity. Such was the case with Louis Egelson, who, as Cohen shows, ultimately left his Conservative congregation and became the assistant director of the Department of Synagogue and School Extension of the Reform movement’s Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC).

In the second article, Gregory Kupsky offers a nuanced portrait of Samuel Untermyer and Felix Warburg, two secular leaders in the Jewish community who were American Jews of German descent. Both were uptowners—members of the Jewish elite of New York—and active during the interwar period. However, what muddies the waters of conventional thinking about these yahudim is precisely what sets them apart: their feelings toward their German homeland and their response to the rise of Hitlerism. As Kupsky shows, Untermyer quickly grew disillusioned with Germany and became a vocal leader in the boycott movement through his American League for the Defense of Jewish Rights (ALDJR), later to be renamed the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League to Champion Human Rights (NSANL). Warburg, on the other hand, took a much more cautious public stance toward Hitlerism and was more ambivalent about German cultural life in America. A study such as this reminds us that the complexities of a given leader’s biography are often decisive elements in understanding the style and nature of his or her leadership.

Finally, Christopher Young, in his article on Barnet Hodes’s efforts to erect a statue of the revolutionary hero Haym Salomon in downtown Chicago during the 1930s and early 1940s, documents the actions of a Jewish leader in the general community who served as a bridge between the official culture—that of the nation—and the particular culture of American Jewry: “Like the project’s intended message, the Washington-Morris-Salomon sculpture’s very existence testifies to Hodes’s personal drive as well as his ability to bring together people
from a broad spectrum of American society in order to bring the monument to a successful completion during another era that would ‘try men’s souls.’” As a prominent member of the Jewish community in Chicago and a leading political figure on the city counsel as well as the Patriotic Foundation of Chicago, Hodes, like many of those profiled in these three articles, had a keen sense of the context of his own era. Ultimately, all leaders, according to Gardner, must understand the cultural context in which they function: “Much of the culture is latent. It exists in the minds of its members, in their dreams, in their unconscious. It can be discerned in their legends, in the art and drama of the day, in religious themes, in their history as a people, in their seminal documents, in the stories of their heroes.”

These three articles point to the fact that the ability to lead successfully requires an appropriate understanding of those being led. As Woodrow Wilson once said, “The ear of the leader must ring with the voices of the people.” This volume of the journal shows that, when history from the top down and history from the bottom up meet, there is much to learn.

**Dana Herman, Managing Editor**  
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**Notes**


4That view, however, has not left those titans who led during the 1930s and 1940s immune to the harsh criticism laid on them by historians who argue that they did not do enough to save their co-religionists in Europe.


6Gardner, 165.
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No single date or event marked the birth of the Conservative movement. Rather, the movement emerged slowly over the course of the twentieth century, differentiating itself from the other American Jewish movements as it transitioned from an inclusive “big tent” to a movement with clearer boundaries. While several historians, including myself, have engaged the question of how exactly this process took place, my goal here is somewhat different. In this essay, I will examine what the Conservative movement looked like in the years before it coalesced. I will do this by analyzing the experiences of its first generation of rabbis—the foot soldiers who labored to spread a message that American Jewry was not quite ready to hear. I hope, more broadly, that an understanding of their experiences will ultimately shed light on the challenges faced by new and emergent American religious movements, including the factors that determine whether their first-generation clergy will succeed or fail.

The period of this study is a brief yet critical era—the formative years between Solomon Schechter’s arrival in 1902 to lead the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS) and the creation of the United Synagogue of America in 1913. First, the period is important from an institutional perspective, as it begins with the reorganization of JTS under Schechter and ends with the creation of United Synagogue of America, which would in time become, respectively, the Seminary and the congregational arm of the Conservative movement. Second, because the United Synagogue had not yet formed prior to 1913, the era represents one of relatively haphazard growth—there were few if any guidelines as to the type of congregation that might be part of the emerging movement. And finally, Schechter was a charismatic leader who inspired a cadre of JTS graduates to spread his message throughout America. The period under
study represents the prime years of Schechter’s involvement in their lives and the bulk of the years in which the disciples worked closely with their mentor.

To understand the state of the Conservative movement in this era, I will analyze the experiences of four JTS graduates, who together reflect the range of experiences that their peers faced as they entered the field. Understanding their experiences reveals two critically important conclusions about the Conservative movement in the earliest years of the twentieth century. First, their experiences indicate that there was no clear congregational constituency that was prepared for the specific religious program that they advocated, so each rabbi generally struggled to transform his particular congregation into one that was receptive to his message. Though a handful of congregations were ready-made for Seminary graduates, they were few in number, and most of them were limited to large, urban areas. In the vast majority of cases, however, a rabbi faced a significant amount of congregational resistance, as lay control, generational conflict, and congregational ambivalence made it particularly difficult for him to shape the congregation as he might have liked.

Second, and closely related to the first, the experiences of these rabbis demonstrate that in this era there was not yet a clear definition or boundaries for the emerging movement. Different rabbis interpreted the term “Conservative” in different ways, and so too did their congregations. As a result, each rabbi was forced to tailor his own personal program to differing congregational realities, and thus Conservative Judaism could take wildly different forms from one place to the next—there was no one model, but rather the emerging movement was characterized by frequent experimentation. This, understandably, created fluid and porous boundaries that prevented the movement from articulating a unified message that would easily distinguish it from the other movements in American Judaism. These porous boundaries, coupled with the lack of a congregational constituency, posed significant challenges to the early JTS graduates, and their ultimate success was far from guaranteed.

Solomon Schechter and His Disciples

Solomon Schechter came to JTS in 1902 with the aim of both revitalizing and Americanizing traditional Judaism. Schechter, the world-renowned scholar who had gained fame by his discovery of the Cairo Genizah, was concerned with what he saw in both the Reform and Orthodox camps. On the left, he believed that Reform Jews had deviated too far from tradition, and on the right he maintained that a large number of Orthodox Jews had failed to adapt to America by clinging to Yiddish as the vernacular, by failing to adopt modern educational methods, and by lacking the decorum that he believed was consistent with American religious sensibilities. Schechter had no plans to create a new, third movement, but he wanted to unite American Jewry behind a platform of traditional Judaism infused with decorum, English, and modern education.
Only by doing this, he maintained, could the next generation of American Jews remain committed to Judaism.

To implement his vision, Schechter trained a cadre of JTS students—his disciples—to carry this vision of Judaism to congregations across America. These disciples were a diverse group. Some were trained at the finest east European yeshivot, some were American-born with little traditional Jewish training, some received their training in central Europe, and one was from Palestine. Just as diverse as their backgrounds were their particular religious beliefs. Some advocated mixed seating and organs, while others believed that such innovations moved beyond the acceptable bounds of traditional Judaism. While they differed markedly on the particulars, they agreed on what they called the “essentials”—traditional Judaism with English, modern education, and decorum—and they would devote their careers to implementing this message.

As these disciples left JTS to advocate for Schechter’s vision, they knew that most of their congregations would not quite be ready for what they had to offer. Schechter “would warn the students and remind them that they must not expect a bed of roses when they would graduate; that their work would be difficult, that it will not be as easy as other callings…” One disciple recalled that “the number of congregations in the entire country available for Seminary graduates was very few,” and salaries were “pitifully low.” Moreover, many turn-of-the-century synagogues had a vague desire for a “modern rabbi” but no clear understanding of how a “modern rabbi” could also be traditional, often putting the JTS graduate in the middle of congregational disputes. Whether the disciples truly understood just how difficult their task would be is not clear, but those who failed to heed these warnings would soon discover the harsh reality.

Herman Abramowitz: Success with Little Controversy

Though quick success was more the exception than the rule, there were some Schechter disciples who succeeded fairly easily in their early careers. One such rabbi was Herman Abramowitz, a 1902 JTS graduate, who found immediate success while encountering little conflict. Abramowitz began his career in 1902 at Shaar Hashomayim of Montreal. The Shaar, as it is frequently called, was a

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traditional congregation that was well established when he arrived. Searching for a rabbi to fill a vacancy created when their spiritual leader abruptly left the synagogue, its leaders asked Schechter to recommend someone, and he suggested Abramowitz—then a twenty-two-year-old rabbinical student.\footnote{After a successful High Holiday season, members of the Shaar were particularly impressed by his speaking ability and decided to hire him full-time upon his graduation.} Abramowitz was successful in large part because he was offered a position at a stable congregation that was well aligned with his vision—a lucky break that was all too rare among his colleagues. Abramowitz was a staunch supporter of traditional Judaism, and when he arrived at the Shaar in 1902, he found a synagogue that had already committed itself to this way of life. The traditionalism at the Shaar could have been due to its Canadian context, as congregations in Canada were frequently more traditional than those in the United States. However, there were other congregations in the United States led by JTS graduates that looked very similar. Nevertheless, congregational minutes from before Abramowitz’s tenure show frequent concern that changes to ritual conform to traditional Jewish law, and thus the Shaar was already firmly committed to traditional Judaism.\footnote{In addition to its emphasis on tradition, the Shaar was also deeply committed to more progressive elements of worship—the use of English and the incorporation of decorum, for example—even prior to the new rabbi’s arrival. The congregation had issued rules to foster a more orderly and decorous service, informing the congregants that “walking or whispering is strictly forbidden,” that “chanting or humming” to the cantor was not acceptable, and that members were to immediately take their seats upon entering the synagogue. Yet there were limits to the Shaar’s progressiveness—the congregation rejected innovations such as the organ, preferring instead a choir whose members wore ornate gowns to make the service more reverential. Abramowitz’s balance between traditionalism and progressiveness aligned well with his new congregation’s practices, and when he arrived, he and the Shaar were in general agreement on the congregation’s outlook.}

When they differed, however, Abramowitz seemed willing to compromise, and he maintained a nonconfrontational attitude with synagogue leadership. After watching Abramowitz’s performance as their interim High Holiday rabbi, leaders of the Shaar were delighted to see his positive interaction with the younger generation. Yet the older members of the synagogue were still concerned with his youth and his level of traditional observance—for example, many members of the congregation had long, traditional beards, but Abramowitz did not. The young rabbi nevertheless demonstrated his willingness to adapt and avoid confrontation, agreeing to grow a beard. Throughout his life, Abramowitz wore a trademark goatee, perhaps a compromise between the traditional beards.
characteristic of the older generation and the clean-shaven face with which he first arrived.11

While Abramowitz was able to adapt to the desires of the older generation, his congregational program also seems to have been non-confrontational and mostly acceptable to the congregation. While there was no doubt friction at times between rabbi and congregation, it did not reach the boiling point where either rabbi or congregation severed their relationship. Much of the young rabbi’s early work was aimed at providing the youth with educational opportunities. After a short time on the job, he instituted a Young People’s Society, with the purpose of preparing the near-mature generation for synagogue leadership positions.12 He also emphasized education, serving as the principal of the religious school, and his work seems to have paid off. In 1915, 133 of the 190 children in the congregation attended the Sunday school, and 75 children received private Hebrew instruction.13

Abramowitz, then, offers a fairly rare example of success with very little conflict. He arrived at a congregation in a large city that was already committed to the broad form of Judaism that Schechter advocated, and Abramowitz’s understanding of tradition, decorum, and progressiveness matched nicely with that of his congregation. Once at the Shaar, he avoided conflict by instituting a nonconfrontational program and by compromising when necessary. He remained there for his entire career until his death in 1947.14

Herman Rubenovitz: Success with Major Controversy

The second rabbi I will analyze is one who was also successful, but in a very different way. Herman Rubenovitz arrived at a congregation in another large city, Boston, which did not completely align with his balance of traditional Judaism and progressiveness—for example, Rubenovitz would advocate for an organ, though his congregation was initially far more traditional. He was successful, however, because he challenged his congregation to adopt his vision, endured a major schism, and eventually created the type of congregation in which he would be comfortable.

Before arriving in Boston, Rubenovitz, a 1908 JTS graduate, first accepted a position at Congregation Adath Jeshurun in Louisville. Adath Jeshurun had been founded in 1851 and was, according to a congregational historian, “one
of the pioneers in adjusting to the American environment while remaining loyal to Jewish traditions." Once in Louisville, Rubenovitz’s work won the glowing praise of his teacher. “If all our alumni would do their duty to their Congregations and to their alma mater as you are doing,” Schechter told him, then the “Seminary will certainly accomplish its mission to American Jewry and to Israel in general.”

Rubenovitz’s time in Louisville was short, and he arrived in 1910 at Congregation Mishkan Tefila in suburban Boston, where he remained for the rest of his career. There he did not find a situation that brought him great success, but he did create such a situation. Mishkan Tefila was founded in 1858 by Jews from Prussia and Posen, and they used German as the vernacular. In 1907, the congregation moved into a former church, which already “had comfortably cushioned pews,” and mixed seating became the norm. In addition, the congregation’s vernacular changed from German to English, and a confirmation ceremony for girls was introduced.

Despite the progressive changes, Mishkan Tefila was not yet a place where a Seminary graduate could find easy success. One JTS rabbi who served before Rubenovitz described Mishkan Tefila as “absolutely without prestige or future.” He believed that “its glory is all in the past”; moreover, he did not believe that, for JTS-trained rabbis, “the position of Rabbi can ever be a happy one in that congregation.” None of his colleagues, he believed, should accept a position there, “except as a last resort.”

When Rubenovitz arrived in Boston to lead this “old re-organized temple,” it was clear that his new congregation did not match his religious views as closely as Abramowitz’s views matched Shaar Hashomayim. Rubenovitz was one of the more progressive early graduates of the Seminary, and while there were some signs of progressiveness in his new congregation, it was still too traditional for his liking. “When I stepped into the pulpit of Mishkan Tefila,” he later wrote, “I found to my dismay that the old ways and methods were still observed there.” He was concerned that “the sons and daughters of Orthodox Jewish parents” were forsaking tradition by attending Sunday services at Reform congregations. “These young people were dazzled by this radical reform which they mistook for progress and true Americanism,” he maintained. Rubenovitz was particularly concerned that:

The religious situation in our midst is one which must fill every thinking Jew with fear and apprehension for the future. The neglect of religious observance, the emptiness of our synagogues, the indifference of our young people and their ignorance of things Jewish, all these are so many danger signals warning us of the decline of religious enthusiasm, and of the decay of religious life. How to rekindle the waning enthusiasm and check this process of decay is the problem now confronting the synagogue of today.
Rubenovitz believed that the congregation needed to change, so he set out to shape it in a way that was more in accordance with his own views. His success would thus be far more difficult to achieve than the success Abramowitz found.

Some of the changes Rubenovitz advocated were not overly controversial. One of his first orders of business, for example, was to introduce modestly greater levels of decorum, as he believed that “in the first place a more aesthetic and dignified setting had to be given to the traditional synagogue service if the loyalty and support of our young people were to be won for it.”23 During the High Holiday service, “the choirboys invariably became restless” and often did not “observe their cues and had punishment administered by the cantor in view of the entire congregation.” Rubenovitz determined that “something more in keeping with good taste and proper decorum would have to be introduced.”24

He also believed in strengthening Jewish education. He felt that for young people to remain loyal to Judaism, “an intensive Jewish education which began in early childhood,” including Hebrew language and Hebrew Bible as central components, was necessary. He also argued that study circles, discussion groups, and evening courses in Hebrew and Jewish history were essential for adults and young adults.25

Some of his proposed changes, however, were much more controversial and would require Rubenovitz to confront his congregation and challenge them to adopt his views. The new synagogue building was a former church and already “contained a fine organ,” though it does not appear that the organ was used initially on Sabbaths and holidays.26 However, during a trip to Europe in 1913, Rubenovitz found a “glorious musical setting in the leading temples of Paris, Berlin and Vienna,”27 and when he returned, he tried to incorporate what he had seen into his own congregation. He thus began to advocate for a mixed choir and organ use on holidays and Sabbaths—both of which were in conflict with traditional Jewish law. This proposal was more radical than those that many of his fellow disciples may have advocated, but Rubenovitz nevertheless remained committed to other forms of tradition, insisting that the traditional Hebrew prayers “were to be maintained intact.”28 What he was advocating was not to his mind Reform Judaism, but his interpretation of Conservative Judaism.

To make the changes he desired, Rubenovitz would need to confront his congregation and find a majority of members willing to support his proposal. At what he described as a “stormy Congregational meeting” in the fall of 1914, Rubenovitz won a major victory in his quest to remake his congregation, implementing the organ and choir.29 The vote was close, however, with sixty-seven voting for Rubenovitz’s proposal and fifty-four against.30 After Rubenovitz’s proposal was approved, he recalled that “our membership grew rapidly” and “for the first time, Boston Jewry witnessed a new type of religious service in which the hallowed, traditional ritual of the synagogue was invested with a beauty and dignity which won the hearts of young and old.” Others from
New England were so impressed with the service, he maintained, “that they adopted it as a pattern to be followed in their own congregations.”

Therefore, while Rubenovitz was successful, his success came in a very different manner than that of Abramowitz. Rubenovitz found a congregation that did not match his religious views, and to succeed, he was forced to shape the congregation according to his own views. As we will see, not every rabbi could accomplish this feat. In addition, Rubenovitz differed from Abramowitz in that his “synthesis of tradition and modern spirit” was far more liberal. As a sign of the great diversity within the emerging Conservative movement, Rubenovitz and Abramowitz were both successful in implementing radically different congregational programs.

Louis Egelson: Failure and Departure

Louis Egelson, the third rabbi whom I will analyze, made a similarly bold attempt to institute change in a congregation in a major city, but unlike Rubenovitz, he was unable to convert his Washington, DC, congregation to his point of view. While his failure to implement change was not unique, what sets Egelson apart from most Seminary graduates was his willingness to leave the orbit of his colleagues and transfer his primary identification to the Reform movement, where he became a leader and remained for the rest of his career.

The American-born Egelson, also a 1908 JTS graduate, accepted his first pulpit at Congregation Adath Israel in Washington, DC, at age twenty-two. At its heart, Adath Israel was very traditional—it had been founded in 1869, when a group of more traditionally minded German Jews broke away from the Washington Hebrew Congregation because it was adopting reforms with which they did not agree. The new congregation’s constitution declared that all prayers, with the exception of the prayer for the government, “shall be read in the original Hebrew language, according to the custom of the Orthodox German Israelite Minhag Ashkenaz.” Moreover, “no alteration, amendment, or modification shall ever at any time be made to those articles of the constitution pertaining to the mode of worship.” Finally, its president was to “abstain from all secular pursuits on the Sabbath (Saturday)...”
While the congregation was very protective of traditional Judaism, it nonetheless incorporated some progressive elements, including an increased level of decorum. The president was not only to observe the Sabbath, he was also in charge of “preserving proper order and decorum, causing to be ejected any disorderly person.”

Though Adath Israel balanced traditional and progressive elements, it was not a ready-made congregation for a Seminary graduate. Shortly before Egelson’s arrival, the synagogue had been under the leadership of another JTS-trained rabbi, who felt that he had been unsuccessful in transforming the congregation according to his vision. That rabbi strengthened the school, but he complained that his congregants did not “follow certain of the principles of our religion, without which they would not be Orthodox Hebrew.” Moreover, he tried to insist on Sabbath observance, but to no avail. “Various other matters of observance it is absolutely impossible to persuade them to observe,” he maintained, “and it seems that my labor [sic] are gone for nothing.” He was also disappointed that, despite his efforts, families did not send their children to the congregational school in the numbers that he had hoped. This rabbi’s experience foreshadowed a major challenge for Orthodoxy in the mid-twentieth century: Would an Orthodox congregation be one that practiced Orthodoxy within its walls, or must its members also live Orthodox lifestyles?

Frustrated by members who did not incorporate traditional Jewish practices into their own lives, this rabbi left Adath Israel. He was followed for a brief time by an east-European-trained rabbi, and then by Egelson, who arrived in 1908—shortly after the dedication of a new building. Egelson also knew that he was in a situation that would require him to remake the congregation if he wanted to succeed. He compared his new synagogue to a “field large in area, that had been lying fallow for a number of years” and claimed that the field had “neither been plowed nor furrowed.”

Like the congregation’s previous rabbis, and also much like Abramowitz and Rubenovitz, Egelson chose to emphasize education, but he was frustrated by the tepid response to his initiatives. He sought “to train the young that they may be able properly to take the places of their elders in the Jewish ranks, and in the councils and administration of the synagogue” by teaching an afternoon Hebrew school class, and he offered a Hebrew course for adults and high school students. However, he disappointedly observed that “there was little response to this effort.” Moreover, during his tenure, financial difficulties and a drop in registration forced a citywide Talmud Torah to close.

Ignoring Egelson’s efforts to strengthen education was not the only way the laity stood in his way; they were also skeptical of his plans to modernize the congregation in other ways. Egelson was concerned about “consigning the women to the gallery during service,” so he advocated mixed seating as a way to put “men and women on an equal footing.” Like many of his colleagues, he
also “instituted late Friday evening services” with lectures that would educate his congregants, “but there was little response on the part of members.” 46 Egelson advocated the “introduction of more modern ideas into the worship” 47 and felt that a ceremony was less important than the motivation behind it, implying that further changes to ritual may have been permissible. 48 Those members of his congregation who viewed him as “Reform” for advocating these positions were given more fodder when it was rumored that the young and (apparently) unmarried rabbi was dating a member of the local Reform congregation. 49

The most important disagreement, however, between Egelson and the congregation was over the use of English in the synagogue. Egelson believed that the disinterest from members of the younger generation stemmed from their inability to understand Hebrew, which prevented them from gaining anything substantive from the services. 50 Understanding that his efforts to teach Hebrew were mostly for naught, he then “decided that the only way to prevent the younger element from going to the radical reform Temple, was to introduce some English into the service.” 51 Egelson believed that when combined with decorum, the English sermon “will do more to retain the allegiance of the younger generation to Orthodoxy than any other agency.” 52 Accordingly, he tried to add in English “a scriptural reading, a prayer, and the benediction,” but a “mild protest” came from the older generation. When he proposed a prayer book that contained both English and Hebrew, he also heard opposition from the older generation. “They must yield to the English in order that their children may become better Jews,” Egelson maintained. 53

Unable to shape the congregation as he wished by introducing English, he polarized the congregation and forced a referendum on his program. He delivered a sermon titled “Some Weeds of Orthodox Judaism,” in which he called certain practices “little more than the superstitious baggage of an outmoded past.” In the speech, he specifically criticized the practice of selling honors for the High Holidays within the synagogue itself. 54 Additionally, he “denounced the congregation on Kol Nidre night rather severely and pleaded for the inclusion of some English in the service on the High Holidays so that the younger people could recite some prayers.” 55 In response to his Kol Nidre admonition, “the older people, many of whom have long since given up Sabbath observance, raised their voice in holy horror…” He was frustrated that there was “still great objection on the part of some to reciting their prayers in a language they understand.” 56

Though he knew that his actions had the potential to “bring about a rupture in the congregation itself,” Egelson nevertheless continued his attempts to shape the congregation according to his views. 57 It did not take long, however, for this rupture to occur, and the split would be along generational lines: The elders of the congregation (“Jews from the Old World”) opposed him, and the younger, more upwardly mobile and wealthy members supported him. 58 The young rabbi knew that navigating these two factions, which seemed to be equally divided,
would be challenging. He knew that “if some of my suggestions are not adopted by the majority of the congregation, my position becomes an untenable one.”

That is exactly what happened. While Rubenovitz survived his congregational referendum by thirteen votes, Egelson lost his by a mere two votes, and in late 1910, his contract was not renewed. Initially, Egelson and his supporters fought for their position. Two trustees announced their resignations immediately after the vote, and others threatened to do the same. Some members of the congregation circulated a petition asking the board to reconsider its position, but Egelson refused to defuse the situation by compromising. The Washington Post reported Egelson’s friends as saying that “Mr. Egelson will not capitulate from his stand in favor of church progressiveness, and the partial use of the English language in services, even though his failure to do so should cost him the reelection.” It did.

While the congregation battled internally, Egelson decided that he wanted no part of the squabble, and regardless of the outcome, he would “seek another field which is more in harmony with my religious views.” He first considered working with the progressive faction to create a new congregation “that shall be conservative rather than either orthodox or reform,” though as we have seen, it is unclear just what “Conservative” meant from one rabbi or congregation to the next. Nevertheless, this plan never came to fruition; instead, the progressives remained at Adath Israel, which suffered through a tumultuous era filled with ambivalence and financial uncertainty. Over the next approximately ten years, the congregation was led by no fewer than three additional JTS graduates and at least one European-trained hazzan. This reflects the congregation’s difficulty in choosing a clear direction, and the congregational uncertainty both before and after Egelson’s tenure speaks to the difficult conditions for Seminary rabbis in congregations that were not quite ready for their messages.

Egelson, meanwhile, left the Seminary orbit and accepted a position at the Reform Temple Emanuel in Greensboro, North Carolina—though during the controversy he had called the notion that was embracing Reform “absurd.” This action highlights the porous boundary between Reform and Conservative Judaism during this era. The Greensboro congregation had been founded in 1907 as an informal worship group, and Egelson apparently served it from 1911–1914.

Egelson was not the only Seminary-trained rabbi to officiate at Reform congregations or join the organizations of the Reform movement. But while some who were affiliated with the Reform movement remained part of the Seminary orbit, in close contact with Schechter and their fellow JTS graduates on matters such as job placement, Egelson apparently did not. Ultimately, he became the assistant director of the Department of Synagogue and School Extension of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Reform movement’s congregational arm, where he remained until his death in 1957.
Egelson, then, shares much in common with Rubenovitz—save for the outcome. Both rabbis inherited congregations that were not in line with their religious views, and both challenged their congregations to adopt their outlooks. But while Rubenovitz was able to overcome the more traditional elements in his congregation by thirteen votes, Egelson lost his by two—strengthening the notion that the laity was the engine driving the train of American Judaism and highlighting the fine line between success and failure. But the experiences of these two rabbis also speak directly to the undefined boundaries between Conservative and Reform Judaism. Rubenovitz advocated a program with an organ—far more progressive than the incorporation of English that Egelson demanded of his congregants. Yet Rubenovitz was to become a Conservative leader, while Egelson was to become a leader in the Reform movement.

Moses J. Abels: Repeated Failure

The fourth and final rabbi I will examine is Moses J. Abels, whose early career was characterized by repeated failure—not a singular experience among Schechter’s disciples. Abels represents the type of rabbi who would struggle to implement Schechter’s vision in one congregation, generally fail, and then move on to the next congregation, where he would usually fail as well. Abels also frequently served smaller communities, and he preferred working in Reform congregations to Orthodox ones, viewing it as his mission to push Reform congregations toward greater traditionalism. Though he joined some Reform organizations, he nevertheless remained committed to Schechter and to spreading his own interpretation of Conservative Judaism within the congregations he served.

Abels also graduated from JTS in 1908, and his early career strongly supports the notion that most congregations—especially those in smaller cities and towns—were not ready-made for JTS graduates. His first pulpit was at Congregation Beth Ha-Shalom in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, a position that he was none too excited to accept. Beth Ha-Shalom was founded by German Jews in 1866, and by the time Abels arrived, there were signs that the congregation was somewhat divided religiously. First, with regard to practice, the congregation was progressive—it featured an organ and mixed choir by the late nineteenth century. Yet there were also traditionalist tendencies. An 1891 resolution, for example, guaranteed those over age sixty the right to wear head coverings, if doing so was “in accordance with their personal beliefs.” Moreover, east European Jews were beginning to come to Williamsport in the early twentieth century, potentially providing a pool for those who might want to turn to traditionalism. Second, and more importantly, with regard to affiliation and leadership, the congregation was aligned with the Reform movement in the late nineteenth century, yet it also employed JTS rabbis—at least two had preceded Abels and at least one succeeded him.
Despite the potential to capitalize on these traditionalist sentiments, Abels was less than enthusiastic about taking the position. He told Schechter that he would go there “half-heartedly,” because “the position is far from desirable.” Moreover, he said that “there is in this place absolutely no Jewish community at all, in the true sense of the term.” To prove his point, he told of a conversation in which he asked a member of the community if the community practiced circumcision. “His astonishing answer,” wrote Abels, “was that as far as he knows—and he is an old resident—there are no children born in the Jewish community of Williamsport.”

By 1909, Abels had already left Williamsport for a position at Temple of Truth in Wilmington, Delaware. Temple of Truth was founded in 1906 as a Reform congregation, but it was somewhat ambivalent about its religious identity. First, the congregation wavered as to just how many reforms it would adopt. It decided to “teach in English, and [that] the Hebrew language would be eliminated,” but it still observed the second day of holidays. Second, Temple of Truth was indecisive of its rabbis’ affiliations, turning to both Hebrew Union College (HUC), the Reform movement’s seminary, and to JTS for its spiritual leadership. Reflective of its ambivalence, the congregation employed four different rabbis in its first four years. After Abels left the congregation, he was followed by a German-trained Reform rabbi, who was then succeeded by a JTS-trained rabbi.

Abels viewed Temple of Truth in much the same negative way that he viewed his Williamsport congregation. He wrote that Temple of Truth was “virtually no congregation at all, because its membership is so small.” The Jews of Wilmington as a whole hardly appealed to him, either. He wrote that they were “a cheap, uncultured lot” and “from the standpoint of Jewish activity, Wilmington is a barren field or to be more exact a field of thorns.”

Unhappy with his position, Abels claimed that he would “take anything rather than remain here,” and in 1911 began to search in earnest for what he saw as a more desirable position. When asking Schechter for a better post, he pointed to those of three rabbis as examples—one in New York, one in Philadelphia, and another in Newark—suggesting that Abels was more hopeful about his chances for success in a larger city. Though he sensed that he was becoming “a perfect nuisance” to Schechter, he nevertheless asked his teacher for help, because, he told him, “I am sans prestige, sans physically impressive appearance and sans [traditional attributes] such as beard, silk-hat, Episcopal gown and the other paraphernalia which I thoroughly detest.” Abels was frustrated that in at least one job search, he was “utterly ignored.”

Seeking to better his lot, Abels inquired about Congregation Shaari Zedek in Brooklyn. Like Williamsport and Wilmington, this congregation was also ambivalent about its religious orientation, and reflects the porous boundaries between American Jewish movements in this era. Shaari Zedek had been
founded in 1902, and though most of its rabbis came from HUC during this period, its members claimed that the services were conducted “on the conservative basis.” The congregation featured an organ, mixed seating, and mixed choir. Men wore head coverings, but prayer shawls were optional, and the congregation used the Jastrow prayer book. Abels believed that this congregation offered some prospect of success, but he nevertheless remained in Wilmington.

Still intent on securing a new position, Abels turned his attention to the United Hebrew Congregation in St. Louis. Like the aforementioned congregations—and many others during this era—this congregation was also ambivalent about its religious orientation. United Hebrew Congregation identified as “Moderate Reform” but also featured a group of members who hoped to swing the congregation back to traditionalism. Abels believed that he could help this process along, as he maintained that the congregation was “of a strong conservative tendency” and could “be saved to Conservative Judaism having as it does a large membership of wealthy Russians.” He asked for Schechter’s attention before “the position slips into the hands of some Hebrew Union College man.”

Unsuccessful in his attempt to secure the St. Louis congregation, Abels soon turned his attention to Sir Moses Montefiore Congregation in Richmond, Virginia. Unlike many of the other congregations in which he was interested, this congregation was founded in 1886 by Russian Jews as a more traditional option to those available in the city. Though Richmond offered more money than his post in Wilmington, his opinion of the congregants at both synagogues sounded similar. From his first impression, he believed that the congregation was composed of the “cheapest sort of Jews—pawnbrokers, barbers, shoemakers and even some ex-jailbirds (several of the leading members have served terms in the penitentiary for selling ‘dope’ to the negroes.)” He ultimately decided against Sir Montefiore Congregation because “by changing from Wilmington to Richmond I would simply be jumping from the frying pan to the fire.”

In 1912, Abels finally found the position he was looking for in Altoona, Pennsylvania, and he seemed generally happy. Altoona’s Temple Beth Israel was founded in 1874 and had joined the Reform movement in 1907. Despite its Reform affiliation, the congregation hired the JTS-trained Abels as its rabbi, and in 1914 he wrote to Schechter that his life in Altoona “is quite a happy one. My Congregation has been congenial and considerate and my work has been unusually successful.” He wrote that he had organized schools in the surrounding smaller Jewish communities and had delivered lectures for the Menorah Society at Penn State. He was elected for a third term, in part because the members had “raised their own assessments in order to make my stay possible.”

Yet despite his apparent success, all was not well, and by 1914 Abels was looking for yet another post, having come to feel that his “position offer[ed] no prospects for the future.” He focused again on larger cities, expressing
interest in a pulpit in New York City, which he refused to consider because the congregation’s president would not provide him with basic membership and salary information before he visited.\(^9\) He also inquired about Anshe Chesed in Scranton, Pennsylvania—a community, he explained, with a Jewish population nearly ten times that of Altoona and offering “at least some material with which to build.” Abels told Schechter that Anshe Chesed was a “regular Reform congregation;”\(^10\) it featured an organ and English prayers, and men did not wear head coverings.\(^11\) Abels, however, sensed ambivalence within the congregation, and he thought it had the potential to incorporate more traditional elements. While they had a Reform rabbi, Abels believed that “they have been so shocked by the sensationalism and unwarranted attack on the Bible by their rabbi” that they might be willing to try a JTS graduate.\(^12\) Shortly thereafter, Abels asked about a position in Seattle but received a disheartening response.\(^13\) Although he was dissatisfied with his position in Altoona and believed that it offered “no prospects for the future,”\(^14\) he ultimately he remained there until 1924.

Though Abels bounced from congregation to congregation, he nevertheless hoped for a measure of stability. “Repeated changes do no good,” he told Schechter; a “rolling stone gathers no moss.” What Abels desired was something that was all too rare for rabbis in this period—a so-called “desirable” post. “What I want is a future, and I can only have a future if I identify myself with a congregation composed of intelligent, more or less Americanized, Jews,” he maintained. “I hope you will forgive me,” he wrote to Schechter, “but I feel somehow,” because of a “lack of opportunities, that my life is a failure.”\(^15\)

The early career of Moses Abels thus demonstrates that for rabbis on the outside looking in, the prospect of success seemed particularly dim. His experiences also point to significant congregational ambivalence and show how daunting it was to shape a congregation according to a rabbi’s particular beliefs. Moreover, Abels’s experiences highlight the difficulty in defining the term “Conservative” and point to the undefined boundary between Reform Judaism and the emerging Conservative movement during this era.

**Conclusion**

The experiences of Abramowitz, Rubenovitz, Egelson, and Abels help us to understand the Conservative movement in the years before it coalesced and highlight challenges faced by first-generation clergy of new American religious movements. First, their travails demonstrate that their emerging movement had no clear congregational constituency that was prepared for the religious program that they advocated. According to one rabbi, there were still “few communities that desire to maintain the principles of Traditional Judaism, and at the same time, realize the value of decorum and the English sermon in the service, and of modern methods in inculcating the principles of our faith in the hearts of the coming generation.”\(^16\) As we have seen, particularly with Abels’s experiences, this was very much the case.
Faced with this bleak landscape, most rabbis sought to shape congregations so that they would be receptive to their messages. “Conservative congregations in America are not born, but have to be made by the graduates of the Seminary,” observed one JTS graduate. “The congregations are either orthodox or reform, and the rabbi has either to bring them back or to advance them to conservatism.”107 Again, as we have seen, this was often easier said than done.

Rabbis struggled to shape their congregations according to their beliefs because of several factors. To begin with, each rabbi served at the whim of lay leaders who would ultimately decide his fate. Rabbis were beholden to the laity’s vision for each congregation, a reality that the early JTS graduates shared with clergy from other Jewish and non-Jewish religious movements. For example, one Reform rabbi complained in 1904 that his colleagues remained at the whim of “rich vulgarians and upstart parvenus.”108 Because each rabbi was beholden to his lay leadership’s vision for his congregation (including its vision for a healthy bottom line), the rabbi had to be flexible and politically astute—creating alliances with factions within the synagogue to maintain his job.

Transforming a congregation was also exceptionally difficult because synagogues were frequently divided along shifting generational lines, and it was up to the rabbi to build a coalition that would support his policies by a majority vote. Generally, members of the younger generation were prepared for the changes sought by the JTS rabbi, as they hoped to Americanize Judaism to make it more relevant to their lives. Members of the elder generation, however, often feared that these changes were simply a conduit to further reforms, and they frequently stood opposed. Abramowitz was able to navigate those generational differences fairly easily, growing a goatee, for example. For Rubenovitz and Egelson, however, this was much more challenging. Rubenovitz divided his congregation between young and old, eventually prevailing by a narrow margin. Egelson similarly polarized his congregation along generational lines but lost by an even slimmer margin.

Their experiences show that it was often impossible for a rabbi in this era to concurrently satisfy the needs of the multiple factions within his congregation. As generational conflicts flared within congregations, rabbis were faced with the often-impossible situation of trying to satisfy both elements. According to one disciple:

There are congregations, the leading members of which, have reform tendencies but to ‘Satisfy the Orthodox’ are willing to accept what they believe to be a compromise. They expect a rabbi to satisfy both parties. As each side refuses to think clearly on the problem the result is usually that the rabbi fails to satisfy either party. Naturally, each side strives for leadership in the management of the congregations, and their political differences very often make the position of the rabbi impossible.109
Despite the discouraging environment, by 1913 a handful of congregations were ready to be shaped by Seminary rabbis. Most of these positions, including that of Abramowitz, were in large cities. Charles Kauvar, for example, found success in Denver, Max Klein in Philadelphia, Jacob Kohn in New York, and Abraham Hershman in Detroit. Why did most of the success stories from this era take place in cities? Cyrus Adler offered one answer, agreeing with a disciple who suggested that smaller communities were more difficult because “in the small town you get every kind of Jew, from the one who keeps his talith over his head for the Amidah to the atheist. Whereas in a large city where people reasonably divide up you are sure of getting a fairly homogenous congregation.”

Yet simply being in a city was no guarantee for easy success—just ask Herman Rubenovitz or Louis Egelson.

Thus, the early JTS graduates were frequently forced to transform congregations to align with their visions, and the factors that determined whether an individual rabbi could succeed in this task were varied. Some elements—such as tact, patience, political savvy, perseverance in the face of failure, willingness to compromise, and readiness to take on risk—were within his control. Other factors—such as demographics, geography, and, of course, sheer luck—were not. While these factors can certainly be applied to first-generation clergy in other movements, it was never truer than with Schechter’s disciples, who had to shape their own congregations and whose ability to do so was directly tied to their own success or failure.

In addition to the struggle to create a congregational constituency, the second conclusion that we can draw about the state of the movement in this era is that there was no clear model for a “Conservative” congregation, but rather the defining characteristic was frequent experimentation. To begin with, the disciples themselves had no clear, unified message. They could all agree on a broad platform of traditional Judaism infused with English, decorum, and modern education, but beyond that, all bets were off. Rubenovitz, for example, advocated a mixed choir and organ, and Abels saw no difficulty in officiating in Reform congregations that employed these practices. Yet Abramowitz did not seek to incorporate these innovations into his own congregation, and Egelson, though he later joined the Reform movement, did not try to incorporate organ music into his congregation in Washington, DC. Other disciples were adamantly opposed to such innovations, arguing vociferously that they violated the tenets of traditional Judaism. As a result, each rabbi had a different message and was forced to tailor that message to his particular congregational reality. The emerging Conservative movement did not yet have a clear program—a reality similar to that of the emerging Reform movement in the midnineteenth century.

Because there was no clear message or platform for the emergent movement, the boundaries between it and the other American Jewish movements were fluid and porous.
Orthodox Judaism, for example, was not well defined, and in 1913 Henry Pereira Mendes offered definitions of modern Orthodoxy and Conservative Judaism that hardly suggested a precise difference. Mendes, a leader of JTS prior to Schechter’s arrival and also a leader in the Orthodox Union, claimed that modern Orthodoxy “resists innovations such as organs, pews, disuse of Taleth, female voices in the choir, Christians in the choir, etc.,” and termed Conservative Judaism “the Judaism which permits some of the innovations named” [italics mine].113 Exactly what he meant by “some” is unclear. The boundaries between the emergent Conservative and Orthodox movements have been the subject of several recent studies.114

A similarly undefined boundary existed between the Conservative and Reform movements. One disciple maintained that opportunities were available in Reform congregations that had “rebelled at the extremes to which Reform was going.”115 In a similar vein, Abels maintained that “had it not been for the radical Rabbis the Jewish congregations would never have drifted to radical reform.” Therefore, he believed, it was “the duty and function of those who are opposed to radicalism and who are inclined to battle against its pernicious influence to go to places where they can be of some account by acting as a bulwark against further reforms.”116

Abels was not alone in gravitating toward Reform congregations and the Reform movement. Another Schechter disciple agreed with Abels, suggesting that in his experience, “a reform congregation, possessing more intelligence and culture is [more] amenable to change, especially in spirit, to conservatism than the orthodox ones.”117 Yet while “a person encounters almost insurmountable obstacles in winning back the congregation to religious observance,” he nevertheless believed that the influence of a traditional rabbi could influence the congregation to “check the advance of radicalism” and create the possibility of more “constructive work” in advancing their cause.118 One of Schechter’s disciples, who served a Reform congregation for fifty years, successfully reintroduced Hebrew and head coverings, and the congregation ultimately became a pillar of the Conservative movement.119

Taken together, the experiences of these rabbis demonstrate that while its seeds may have been planted, the Conservative movement had in no way reached maturity by 1913. There was no congregational constituency, so rabbis struggled through entrenched lay control, shifting generational alliances, and congregational ambivalence in an attempt to shape congregations that would be receptive to their messages. Moreover, because there was no clear definition of a “Conservative” congregation, the boundaries with Orthodoxy and Reform were undefined. All of this meant that it was far from certain that the seeds planted by Schechter’s disciples would grow into what would become, by the postwar years, the largest movement in American Judaism.
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Notes
1My forthcoming work, The Birth of Conservative Judaism: Solomon Schechter’s Disciples and the Creation of an American Religious Movement (New York: Columbia University Press), engages this question fully and argues that during the first half of the twentieth century, Solomon Schechter’s disciples created a movement based on inclusivity that eschewed unique boundaries. Previous scholarship frequently suggested that the movement was defined by a distinct ideology that always separated it from both Reform and Orthodox Judaism. Another early approach maintained that the movement emerged as a series of disconnected synagogues that began to appear in the American suburbs before the midtwentieth century. More recent works have suggested that the Conservative movement slowly differentiated itself from Orthodoxy over the course of the twentieth century, and my forthcoming work has grown out of this new scholarship.
2Very little work examines the experiences of these rabbis in the early years of the twentieth century. For more, see Cohen, The Birth of Conservative Judaism, and Jack Wertheimer, “Pioneers of the Conservative Rabbinate—Reports from the Field by Graduates of ‘Schechter’s Seminary,’” Conservative Judaism (Summer, 1995): 53-70.
3For more on the relationship between Schechter and his students, see Cohen, The Birth of Conservative Judaism.
7Ibid., 53–56.
8In an interview with Shuchat, Abramowitz said that “English was pretty entrenched at that point [when he arrived at the congregation].” Shuchat, interview by author, 14 March 2007.
9Shuchat, 53.
10Ibid., 52.
11Bernard Figler, Canadian Jewish Profiles: Rabbi Dr. Herman Abramowitz, Lazarus Cohen, Lyon Cohen (Gardenvale, Quebec: Harpell’s Press Co-Operative, 1968), 8–10. His willingness to adapt may also have been related to the fact that he had family in Montreal—and seems to have wanted to stay with the congregation for the long term.
12Shuchat, 60.
13Ibid., 72; Figler, 10.

17A.G. Daniels, “From Ghetto to Temple: Excerpts from a History of Temple Mishkan Tefila, Written on the Occasion of the Golden Anniversary Celebration in 1908,” *Temple Mishkan Tefila: A History, 1858–1958* (Newton, MA: Temple Mishkan Tefila, 1958), 15. This piece was likely written after 1908, or it was amended to include information about Rubenovitz, who was not at the congregation until 1910.

18Nathan Blechman to Israel Friedlander, 9 August 1910, RG 15A, Box 2, Folder 31, Joseph and Miriam Ratner Center for the Study of Conservative Judaism, Records of the Jewish Theological Seminary (hereafter Ratner Center), New York.

19Daniels, 17.


21Ibid., 27–29.

22Ibid., 29.


24Herman Rubenovitz, *The Waking Heart*, 31–34. According to Rubenovitz, Schechter suggested that he observe the methods that were used there. During a trip to Vienna in 1913 as a delegate to the Eleventh Zionist Congress, Rubenovitz had the opportunity to tour several European cities and their synagogues.


26Daniels, 15.


29Ibid.


31Herman Rubenovitz, *The Waking Heart*, 34.

32Ibid., 30.


36Ibid., 105.

37Ibid., 231, 245, 248.

38Ibid., 259–260.


40Ibid., 149. Much like Rubenovitz, Egelson had the privilege of coming to the congregation at a time of transition—as it moved into a new building. This seemingly offered more opportunities for change.


42“Rabbi’s Plan Decried,” 2; “Biography Sheet,” 6 May 1934, RG15A, Box 6, Folder 18, Ratner Center, New York.

43Rabinowitz, 307.
44Egelson to Joseph Jacobs, 21 November 1910, RG 15A, Box 6, Folder 18, Ratner Center, New York.
46“Rabbi Blames Flock,” 9.
48“Rabbi’s Plan Decried,” 2.
49Rabinowitz, 308.
51Egelson to Friedlander, 6 January 1911, RG 15A, Box 6, Folder 18, Ratner Center, New York.
52Egelson to Schechter, 11 March 1913, RG 15A, Box 6, Folder 18, Ratner Center, New York.
53“Rabbi’s Plan Decried,” 2.
54Rabinowitz, 308, 310.
55Egelson to Joseph Jacobs, 21 November 1910, RG 15A, Box 6, Folder 18, Ratner Center, New York.
56“Rabbi’s Plan Decried,” 2.
57Egelson to Jacobs, 21 November 1910, RG 15A, Box 6, Folder 18, Ratner Center, New York.
58“Church War at Height,” Washington Post (10 January 1911): 16.
59Egelson to Jacobs, 21 November 1910, RG 15A, Box 6, Folder 18, Ratner Center, New York.
60Rabinowitz, 308.
62Egelson to Friedlander, 6 January 1911, RG 15A, Box 6, Folder 18, Ratner Center, New York.
63Egelson to Friedlander, 31 January 1911, RG 15A, Box 6, Folder 18, Ratner Center, New York.
64Rabinowitz, 316–319. Initially the congregation hired a hazzan to replace Egelson. It later hired JTS graduate Benjamin Grossman. Not surprisingly, the relationship between this new rabbi and his congregation deteriorated, and he was replaced in 1920 by another Seminary graduate. This relationship, too, ended quickly, and the congregation chose to let his contract expire without renewal. He was followed by another Seminary graduate whose tenure lasted about a year. See Rabinowitz, 321–327.
65Ibid., 310.
66Temple Emanuel, Greensboro, Carolina, To Honor the 75th Anniversary (1982), 4.
67Ibid., 7.
68Rabinowitz, 312.
70Ibid., 17.
71Ibid., 15.
72Benjamin Hirsh, “Ninety-Five Years of Beth Ha-Shalom (continuation),” Journal of the Lycoming County Historical Society 12, no. 2 (Fall, 1976): 22.
73Temple Beth Ha-Shalom, 17.
74Hirsh, 21.
75Abels to Schechter, 23 July 1908, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a (1 of 2), Ratner Center, New York.
76Abels to Schechter, 7 August 1908, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a (1 of 2), Ratner Center, New York.
77Toni Young, Becoming American, Remaining Jewish: The Story of Wilmington, Delaware’s First Jewish Community, 1879–1924 (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1999), 155.
78Ibid., 157.
Abels was followed by Emanuel Schreiber, who was followed by JTS graduate Samuel Rabinowitz in 1915.

Abels to Schechter, 5 September 1911, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a (1 of 2), Ratner Center, New York.

Abels to Friedlander, 26 September 1910, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a (1 of 2), Ratner Center, New York.

Abels to Schechter, 18 June 1911, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a (1 of 2), Ratner Center, New York.

Abels to Schechter, 5 September 1911, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1, Ratner Center, New York.

Abels to Schechter, 26 June 1911, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a (1 of 2), Ratner Center, New York.

Abels to Schechter, 18 June 1911, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a (1 of 2), Ratner Center, New York.

Abels to Schechter, 26 June 1911, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a (1 of 2), Ratner Center, New York.

Abels to Schechter, 26 June 1911, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a (1 of 2), Ratner Center, New York.

Abels to Schechter, 5 September 1911, RG 15A Box 1, Folder 1, Ratner Center, New York.

Abels to Schechter, 2 June 1915, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a (1 of 2), Ratner Center, New York.

In response to the Seattle request, Abels told Schechter in the postscript that “Charles Hoffman answered me that Sioux City was taken!”

Abels to Schechter, 14 May 1914, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a (1 of 2), Ratner Center, New York.

Abels to Schechter, 27 April 1915, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a (1 of 2), Ratner Center, New York.

Abels to Schechter, 9 February 1914, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a (1 of 2), Ratner Center, New York.

Abels to Schechter, 14 May 1914, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a (1 of 2), Ratner Center, New York.

Abels to Schechter, 14 May 1914, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a (1 of 2), Ratner Center, New York. Abels claimed that this rabbi was Mortimer Bloom, a 1913 HUC graduate.

Abels to Schechter, 2 June 1915, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a (1 of 2), Ratner Center, New York. In response to the Seattle request, Abels told Schechter in the postscript that “Charles Hoffman answered me that Sioux City was taken!”

Abels to Schechter, 27 April 1915, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a, Ratner Center, New York.

Abels to Schechter, 5 September 1911, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1, Ratner Center, New York.

Abels to Schechter, 27 April 1915, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a, Ratner Center, New York.

Abels to Schechter, 26 June 1911, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a (1 of 2), Ratner Center, New York.

Samuel Rosenger to colleague, 9 September 1920, RG 15A, Box 23, Folder 10, Ratner Center, New York.


S. Cohen to Adler, 23 November 1917, RG 15A, Box 5, Folder 9, Ratner Center, New York.

Adler to Louis Finkelstein, 20 October 1925, RG 15A, Box 2, Folder 31, Ratner Center, New York. This refers to Nathan Blechman.
See Cohen, *Birth of Conservative Judaism*, for more information on the disciples’ various positions on the organ and other such innovations that conflicted with traditional Jewish law.

The experiences of these rabbis can illuminate what Jeffrey Gurock has called the “fluidity” between Orthodox and Conservative Judaism that, he argues, existed for much of the twentieth century. See Gurock, *From Fluidity to Rigidity: The Religious Worlds of Conservative and Orthodox Jews in Twentieth-Century America* (Ann Arbor, MI: Jean and Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, 1998).

Henry P. Mendes to Cyrus Adler, 14 February 1913, MS39, Box 1, Folder 3, The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH.

For more on this boundary with Orthodoxy, see Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), and Gurock, *Fluidity*.


Abels to Schechter, 5 September 1911, RG 15A, Box 1, Folder 1a (1 of 2), Ratner Center, New York.

Rosinger to colleague, 9 September 1920, RG 15A, Box 23, Folder 10, Ratner Center, New York.

Rosinger to Schechter, 11 August 1911, RG 15A, Box 23, Folder 10, Ratner Center, New York.

Samuel Untermyer
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

Felix M. Warburg
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)
Germanness and Jewishness: Samuel Untermyer, Felix Warburg, and National Socialism, 1914–1938

Gregory Kupsky

Under other circumstances, inviting a foreign ambassador to speak—and flying his country’s flag—would be a diplomatic courtesy. But in a crowded meeting of the United German Societies of New York on September 18, 1933, the issue was a heated one. The ambassador, Hans Luther, represented Hitler’s Germany, and the flag in question bore the swastika. Unfortunately for the opposition, pro-Nazi sympathizers had packed the meeting hall, and the motion to invite Luther was accepted. In response, the Jewish delegates at the meeting immediately staged a walkout. Before departing, one of them expressed the reason for his disgust: “German Jews … have not refused the [German] flag. The flag has refused them.” In subsequent weeks, Jewish organizations formally withdrew from the United German Societies, and the split became a permanent one.¹

Historians of early-twentieth-century immigrant history have only recently begun to explore overlaps between German-American and Jewish-American narratives.² Even terminology presents an obstacle, as illustrated by the loaded term “German Jews.” Does it refer to all Jews from German-speaking Europe, those who belonged to German-American organizations, or those who adhered to German traditions? In other cases, the term has been even more subjective, suggesting affluent, assimilated Jews, the proverbial “old immigrants,” who looked down on newcomers.³ Indeed, much work can be done to sort through these connotations and to shed light on the connections between the two immigrant groups.

In helping to link the stories of Germans and Jews in America, it is helpful to examine German identity among individuals commonly thought of as Jewish leaders. Samuel Untermyer and Felix Warburg, Jewish Americans of German background, make for good case studies, especially in their respective responses to Nazism. While Untermyer and Warburg pursued starkly different strategies in reacting to Nazi Germany, there are important similarities in their stories. Both the American-born Untermyer and the immigrant Warburg had a demonstrable record of German immigrant nationalism prior to 1933, and subsequently they acted in the name of a nation that, they argued, had been hijacked by the Hitler movement. In addition, their centrality in the world of Jewish philanthropy placed them in the middle of American Jewish debates over how to combat Nazism. Finally, their stories demonstrate the ongoing—and increasing—difficulties of traditionally German leadership within the larger Jewish community in the mid-twentieth century.⁴
The Jewish-German-American World

As with other immigrant groups, it is easy to oversimplify the Jewish-American story. But while scholars have rightly questioned the labeling of pre- and post-1880 waves of Jewish immigrants as “German” and “eastern European,” there is no denying that German culture predominated in nineteenth-century American Jewry. A majority of the 250,000 pre-1880 arrivals came from German-speaking lands, and many of them felt at home within German-American organizations.\(^5\) Social distinctions persisted between Jewish and gentile German-Americans, but many nineteenth-century Jewish organizations operated in the German language. Reform Judaism, which originated in Germany, also found broad support in the United States.\(^6\)

At the beginning of the twentieth century, during the Progressive Era, urban-based reformers sought to apply professional expertise and organizing to better manage American cities and improve the lives of their inhabitants.\(^7\) In this context, many Jewish organizations hoped to Americanize newcomers, in part to prevent an antisemitic backlash that could threaten their social positions. By this time, however, a growing number of eastern European immigrants—a majority of the 2.5 million post-1880 arrivals—were challenging the older leadership and its “assimilationist” aspirations.\(^8\) These developments had already begun to strain the German foundations of Jewish organizational life well before Hitler’s appointment as Reich Chancellor in January 1933.

Within German-American communities, gentile as well as Jewish, the twentieth century brought a multitude of problems. For decades, “mass culture,” as exemplified by modern advertising and forms of entertainment that reached broader portions of the population, had pulled individuals from ethnic affinities into a larger, more national identity. At the same time, social identities based on race rather than on countries of origin had sapped the strength of German ethnic consciousness. Worse yet, a hostile atmosphere during World War I convinced many Americans of German descent to shed their ethnic identities.\(^9\) To counter these forces, German-American organizations in the twentieth century pushed for ethnic revitalization. Their efforts culminated in the First German-American National Congress, held in Philadelphia in 1932, which pledged to re-energize German communities. The rise of Nazism shattered whatever unity that movement helped to create, however, as German organizations staked positions ranging from strong support of Hitler to active protest against him. The divisions were especially sharp between Jewish and gentile German-Americans, as the example of the New York societies has demonstrated.\(^10\) Even avowedly apolitical groups such as the Philadelphia-based Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation faced rapid declines in Jewish membership and donations.\(^11\) Nazism, like demographic shifts and assimilation, sent shockwaves through the German-American organizational world.
Samuel Untermyer and Felix Warburg were part of that turbulent world. Untermyer was an American-born attorney who placed himself at the head of the effort to fight Nazism through an international boycott. Warburg, an immigrant tied to the European and American banking worlds, pursued a much more cautious strategy in response to the Third Reich. Despite their different trajectories, both stories reflect important trends in American ethnic life, particularly among Jews.

Samuel Untermyer as a German-American

Untermyer was prominent in New York politics and philanthropy in the interwar period. Born in Virginia in 1858, Untermyer started a highly successful law firm in New York City with his half-brother, Randolph Guggenheimer. Untermyer also became active in the Democratic Party, supporting antitrust and regulatory efforts by both Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt. He sometimes felt spurned by the Democratic Party, however, since he never received a national political appointment.\(^{12}\)

Untermyer’s frustration with the Democratic Party was one reason why he increasingly shifted his attention toward Jewish organizations. In the early 1920s Untermyer established himself as a philanthropist and a key member of several important Jewish groups. In the wake of World War I, he supported the international relief efforts of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), as well as various Jewish charities within the United States. Also in the early 1920s, he served as the president of the Keren Hayesod, or Palestine Foundation Fund. The American-born Untermyer considered himself a cultural, rather than political, Zionist. As an Americanized German Jew, he helped the Keren Hayesod collect donations from a larger spectrum of the American Jewish community, especially those who shied from political Zionism. Beyond this work, a vast array of Jewish societies valued Untermyer’s financial and public support.\(^{13}\)

It is also significant, if often overlooked, that Untermyer identified himself as a German-American. Both he and his wife, Minnie Carl of St. Louis, had been raised in immigrant households, and his in-laws boasted of their friendship with the late senator and German-American hero, Carl Schurz.\(^{14}\) Untermyer supported the German Theater in New York and was a member of *Freundschaft*, an ethnic fraternity in the city. In 1916 he served on the memorial committee for the late Herman Ridder, publisher of the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, the nation’s largest German-language daily. He vacationed in Imperial Germany, often patronizing German ocean liners. These activities indicate that Germanness was no small part of his identity, and one can infer from his active participation that other German-American leaders regarded him as a peer.\(^{15}\)

Untermyer’s business connections to Germany often blended with his affinities for that country, even during the period of American neutrality in
World War I. Prior to 1914, his law firm had represented a number of German-American brewing companies. After the outbreak of the war, Untermyer joined other German-Americans in regarding British and French propaganda with suspicion. While his wife, Minnie, coordinated efforts to buy milk for German babies, Samuel consulted with German investors in the United States and even attempted to broker a deal to put the *New York Sun* into the hands of German propagandists. In these efforts, Untermyer left a record of interactions with George Sylvester Viereck, a virulently pro-German writer and paid German propagandist. He also met with Heinrich Albert, a Reich diplomat who was publicly exposed as a coordinator of German espionage in the United States. While the *Sun* deal fell apart, it created suspicions about Untermyer’s loyalty once the United States entered the war. A lack of hard evidence ultimately enabled him to dodge the accusations, however. Untermyer enthusiastically supported the American war effort after April 1917, another move that helped him to counter questions about his loyalties.

 Untermyer’s advocacy for Germany and German-Americans continued after the armistice. He considered himself a Wilsonian, but he denounced the “spirit of conquest and robbery” that had shaped the Versailles Treaty. Viereck—who would be prosecuted in the 1940s as a Nazi agent—entreated Untermyer in 1914 to finance his *Fatherland* magazine, which was dedicated to countering pro-Allied sentiment. While it is unclear whether Untermyer provided monetary assistance, he did periodically contribute articles decrying anti-German attitudes after 1919. Untermyer also maintained business interests within Germany. He owned shares in a German utility company and real estate holdings outside Berlin. The freezing of these assets by the Nazi government after 1933 later served as a concrete representation of the severing of Untermyer’s connections to Germany.

**Felix Warburg as a German-American**

 Unlike Untermyer, Warburg had grown up in Germany; however, the two men’s careers bore similarities. The Moritz Warburg family had built up the M.M. Warburg banking firm in Hamburg, Germany, in the late nineteenth century. By the time of Mortiz’s death in 1910, three of his sons had gained prominence in transatlantic business. The eldest, Max, headed the family firm, sat on the board of the Hamburg-America Steamship Line, and became a financial adviser to Kaiser Wilhelm II. Paul, a year younger, married Nina Loeb, connecting him to the Kuhn, Loeb and Company banking firm in New York. He moved to the United States in 1902 and became a U.S. citizen nine years later, although he still spent considerable time in Hamburg. Felix, originally trained in the diamond and pearl business, had moved to the United States in 1894 and married the daughter of Jacob Schiff, a Manhattan banker and fellow German-Jewish immigrant. Felix received a Kuhn, Loeb partnership in
1897. He quickly became a New York socialite and an active philanthropist. Geography now divided the brothers, but they forged links between Kuhn, Loeb and M.M. Warburg, empowering both companies.20

By 1914, Paul Warburg found his Germanness to be a liability as he worked to reform the American monetary system. Within a year of his arrival in New York in 1902, Paul sketched a proposal for a central banking system that eventually evolved into the Federal Reserve. He served on the Federal Reserve Board in 1914, despite the fact that he had become a target of nativist anger. One congressman, for example, opposed his nomination to the Federal Reserve on the grounds that he was “a Jew, a German, a banker and an alien.” Although Paul was a naturalized citizen who worked actively to Americanize, his transatlantic connections were never far from view. Paul helped to direct the American war economy in 1917 while his older brother Max filled the same role for the German Reich. Such connections later provided fodder for Nazi propagandists, who accused the brothers of orchestrating both the start and the end of the Great War “in the interest of the Jewish race.”21

Felix, three years Paul’s junior, was more outspoken and more active in social circles. He took U.S. citizenship in 1900, quickly becoming comfortable in American society. He joined his father-in-law, Jacob Schiff, in reform work that emphasized Americanization. In turn-of-the-century New York, they sponsored the Henry Street Settlement and joined the Educational Alliance, an organization that catered to poor Jews. His charitable work became “so diverse as to defy easy summary,” as biographer Ron Chernow explains, but a major realm of activity was international relief. In 1906 he joined Schiff in co-founding the American Jewish Committee (AJC), an elite philanthropic organization. He also became the chair of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), created in 1914 to provide support for victims of the European war. Warburg’s reputation as a “democratic aristocrat” helped the JDC to soften animosities between established and recently arrived Jews. He increasingly devoted his time to the JDC, and his stature as a philanthropist increased accordingly.22

By 1917, Warburg had also established himself within the German-American community. He became a member of the Chamber of German-American Commerce; the German Society of New York, a philanthropic society; and the Germanistic Society of America, dedicated to preserving German culture in the United States. Like Untermyer, he demonstrated sympathy for the German Reich. In 1915 he donated funds anonymously to the Hilfsverein deutscher Frauen (German Women’s Aid Organization) and other groups that supported German “war sufferers.” As a partner at Kuhn, Loeb, he helped prevent the company from issuing a loan to the Allies in 1915, a decision that brought scorn from pro-Allied elements of the American press and public.23

Following American entry into the war in April 1917, Warburg moved quickly to support the U.S. war effort. He devoted time and money to the
United Service Organization, donated his own resources to the war effort, and ostentatiously reduced his level of consumption. In 1918, his brother Paul gave in to growing criticism of his German ancestry, resigning from the Federal Reserve Board. Upset by the treatment of Germans in the United States, both brothers became active in the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, dedicated to preserving German-American heritage. Felix, meanwhile, threw himself into the work of the JDC and added investment in Palestine to his already massive record of philanthropy.24

Responses to National Socialism

Immediately following Hitler’s accession to power in January 1933, Jewish organizations in America sought a proper response to a regime suffused with antisemitism. By March, a movement was underway to mount an economic boycott of Nazi Germany. When the divided American Jewish Congress initially hesitated on the matter, the Jewish War Veterans assumed leadership of the movement. Soon, however, the momentum passed to organizations founded specifically to promote the boycott, foremost among them the American League for the Defense of Jewish Rights (ALDJR).25 Jewish leaders diverged on the subject, and Untermyer and Warburg were no exception.

Untermyer actively supported the anti-Nazi movement in America, and he became the head of the ALDJR. He now openly expressed regret for his own pro-German sentiments prior to World War I. As he looked back, he recalled that “German-Jewish advisers” like himself had naively worked for peace, in contrast to the “Hitler–von Tirpitz type” who drove toward war in both the 1910s and 1930s.26 In another attempt to reconcile his older views with his new stance, he compared Nazi propaganda to the “British-French war fables” of 1914,
referring to the Allied campaigns to exaggerate and, in some cases, fabricate German atrocities to steer American public opinion. Americans would no longer accept foreign propaganda at face value. “We … have learned our lesson in the ways of counteracting that kind of poison,” Untermyer declared in 1933.27

His speeches against Nazism also reflected the sense of betrayal that he and other Jews of German background felt in the 1930s, both in Europe and the United States. Untermyer cited a long record of Jewish military service in Germany, as well as Jewish contributions to culture, science, and business, all of which were ignored by “the blind bigotry and fanaticism of the Hitler platform.”28 Undoubtedly, many German-American Jews shared his sentiments, harboring “the strongest feeling of sympathy toward the German people” alongside a “corresponding feeling of revulsion” against the Nazis. As one who had considered himself German, Untermyer was the ideal spokesperson for the ALDJR’s position that the German people were unhappy under Hitler and could be persuaded, through economic pressure, to remove him from power.29

Untermyer sometimes used his German background and perspective to lend credibility to the anti-Nazi movement. In a May 1933 speech, he shared his thoughts on his “old friend,” Herman Metz, who represented the I.G. Farben corporation in the United States and who worked to improve the Nazis’ image abroad. Having talked privately with Metz, Untermyer declared that “Mr. Metz knows what he has seen with his own eyes in Germany.” Sadly, he said, Metz’s economic interest compelled him to defend the Nazis, rather than speak the truth. Citing his personal relationship with Metz provided Untermyer with a unique means of refuting pro-German
propaganda. This view of Metz also reinforced Untermeyer’s assertions about the importance of economic pressure.30

Warburg, too, loathed Nazism, but his reaction was notably different than that of Untermeyer. Warburg was a member of the traditional—and stereotypically “German Jewish”—philanthropic elite. He was a prominent officer of the AJC, founded in 1906 to aid victims of Russian pogroms. For the affluent leaders of the committee, philanthropy had long provided a means of steering Jewish communities and Americanizing newcomers. The committee was so effective in shaping Jewish community life that one scholar has described it as a “self-perpetuating oligarchy.”31

Warburg had long favored assimilation but still retained an affinity for his country of birth. As a result of Nazism, he became ambivalent about German-American cultural life. His relationship with the German Society of New York illustrates this ambivalence. When the charitable organization invited Warburg to serve on its 150th Anniversary Committee in 1934, he declined, saying that he could not “join a committee on which I may meet some people whose attitude toward the present German Government may be more favorable than mine.” He did, however, maintain his membership in the society.32

Warburg took a quieter, more cautious stance toward Nazi Germany than did Untermeyer. This attitude stemmed, in large part, from his desire not to draw attention to his relatives in Europe. His brother Max, after all, was trying to maintain both the family firm and his own physical well-being in Hamburg. As a result, Felix refused to comment publicly on reports of anti-Jewish violence in the spring of 1933. In April, when Reichsbank president Hjalmar Schacht came to the United States, other leaders of the AJC asked Warburg whether they should meet with the German official. Warburg’s secretary replied that the committee should do so but that Warburg himself could not be involved, and his name was to be kept out of any communication. A few years later he sponsored refugee professors through the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars, but only with the understanding that his name never appear in its records.33

For Warburg and Untermeyer, and for their respective organizations, the campaign to boycott imports from Germany remained a heated issue throughout the 1930s. Untermeyer, president of the ALDJR after May 1933, became the boycott movement’s most visible spokesperson. The ALDJR saw his status as an American-born, affluent figure as a way to broaden its appeal, both within and beyond the United States. The calculation seems to have met some success, as a federation of pro-boycott groups chose Untermeyer to appeal their case before the League of Nations in the summer of 1933.34 As Untermeyer often reiterated, the boycott was not simply the most effective means of protest, but the only means. “There is no longer a free press or freedom of speech in Germany,” he explained. “If world opinion does not reach [the Germans], there is just one way, and
only one.” Economic pressure would “reach the masses” and force a repudiation of Nazism.35

Untermyer also insisted on the boycott becoming more than a “Jewish” movement. He characterized it as “the spontaneous uprising of outraged civilization against [the] ‘Mad Dog of Europe.’” Indeed, the need for broad—especially gentile—support convinced Untermyer to change the group’s name to the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League to Champion Human Rights (NSANL) in November 1933.36 The movement spread beyond New York, with the Jewish War Veterans and its women’s auxiliaries helping to disseminate information. The American Jewish Congress finally joined the boycott in August 1933, although it and the Jewish Labor Committee eventually created the Joint Boycott Council as a rival to the NSANL.37 Differences of personality and strategy, including Untermyer’s autocratic leadership style, fueled divisions, but by 1937 the NSANL’s Interstate Conference received progress reports from chapters in Detroit, Cleveland, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and other localities.38

The AJC, whose leadership included Warburg, remained a vocal opponent of the boycott effort, although there is evidence that he initially considered lending his support. He mused in one letter that the German people might change their tone if “their pocketbooks [were] attacked by their own foolishness.” But observing the situation from Germany, where any Nazi retaliation over the boycott would actually occur, his brother Max disagreed. His impassioned pleas against confrontation convinced Felix and the AJC to withhold their support. Meanwhile, the JDC, of which Felix was president, also decided against the boycott. Comparing itself to the Red Cross, it cited a need to remain apolitical.39 In effect, the AJC, the JDC, and B’nai B’rith became the leading organizations that opposed, or at least avoided, the boycott.40

The AJC summarized its case against the boycott in August 1933. The group believed that economic action would provide a pretext for intensified persecution. It also feared alienating Christians, antagonizing German-Americans, and fueling global antisemitism. Instead, the committee favored using personal

Samuel Untermyer returning to New York from London, 6 August 1933
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)
contacts to exert pressure on prominent Reich officials and citizens. One memo even suggested that, in private conversations with Germans, committee members cite the boycott as evidence that the Nazis should mitigate their policies. In this way, it noted, even the reckless boycott movement “may be utilized for a good purpose.”

The turbulent relationship between Untermyer and Warburg reflected that of the organizational world as a whole. The two had not always been amicable—Untermyer had antagonized the Warburgs in 1912 by investigating the Kuhn, Loeb firm as part of an alleged “Money Trust”—but in the 1920s they had found common ground in that both considered themselves non-Zionists in the political sense. Committed simply to supporting Jewish cultural development in Palestine, Warburg joined Untermyer’s Keren Hayesod, and Untermyer supported Warburg’s JDC. Even in the 1930s, Untermyer was at times willing to acknowledge the Warburg family’s precarious circumstances. “I suppose we shall continue to differ as to the policy of the boycott,” he wrote Warburg in 1935, “but your position and that of your people in Germany is quite understandable.” At the same time, however, Untermyer cut off his donations to the JDC, citing its opposition to the boycott.

In public, Untermyer attacked the AJC and B’nai B’rith for their inaction. He undoubtedly had people like Warburg in mind when he railed against those who opposed his movement:

> [W]hen our persecuted, defenseless people are knocked over the head with a club, … these self-constituted leaders retaliate with a cry of pain and strike back by shaking a feather-duster in the faces of their tormentors, and pass eloquent resolutions of protest and appeal, but refuse to use the only effective weapon at hand, by way of defense.

In turn, when Untermyer criticized Secretary of State Cordell Hull for ignoring evidence of Nazi propaganda in America, the AJC publicly denounced Untermyer as irresponsible.

The rejection of public action by Warburg and his associates paralleled that of the United States government. William Dodd, the American ambassador to Germany until 1938, was an unabashed critic of the Nazis, yet he opposed the boycott as counterproductive to “the helps [sic] we apply quietly and unofficially.” Secretary Hull advised President Roosevelt to keep his distance from boycott leaders to prevent any suspicion that the White House supported their actions. Critics of the Warburg family read much into this inaction. Because James Warburg, Felix’s nephew, was an economic advisor to the Roosevelt administration, some detractors even concluded that the Warburgs were shaping official policy on Germany. Thus, at the exact same time that the Nazis blamed the Warburgs for the Versailles Treaty, the Bolshevik Revolution, and other events,
the family came under fire in the United States for being appeasers of Hitler. Such was the price of remaining quiet in a noisy, ideologically polarized era.

Despite his cautious public stance, Warburg did commit to a range of activity to aid German Jews. After hearing an account of persecution in April 1933, he declared:

I am sufficiently enraged, and so are all German Americans, even the Christian ones, … to take some drastic steps, unfriendly to Germany and seemingly unfriendly to M.M. [Warburg], in order to get [the Jews] out of the undignified position in which they find themselves.

To this end, he supported the philanthropic activity of his brother, Max, who remained in Germany. Max chaired the Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden (Aid Society for German Jews) and cofounded several other groups to provide mutual aid within Germany and to sponsor resettlement. These aid organizations even tried—with negligible results—to lobby Reich officials on behalf of Jewish communities.

Responding to criticism of his brother for remaining in Germany, Felix Warburg insisted that the family was trying to aid those unable to leave. The JDC aligned itself with such efforts. In a 1933 letter, its fundraising chair described its goals as “maintaining [German Jewish] institutions, keeping up their morale and preventing them from falling into panic.” The letter also defended quiet action. While “one would expect the whole world to rise and protest,” it said, this was not the case. “Until that time comes, it is the duty of every Jew to protect, if he cannot protest.” Such a statement could only have incensed boycott leaders.

Within the divided Jewish organizational world, one strategy—refugee aid—provided some common ground. In March 1934 the JDC’s United Jewish Appeal campaign in New York, chaired by Warburg, merged the efforts of the JDC and the American Palestine Campaign. In the following two years it raised more than four million dollars for resettlement. Untermyer, despite earlier refusals, donated generously to the JDC in 1938, stipulating that his money be used only to get people out of Germany. Meanwhile, the JDC, the AJC, and the American Jewish Congress all collaborated in resettling and educating German Jewish children. Felix and Max Warburg cofounded the Council for German Jewry, dedicated to relocating 100,000 German Jewish youth. While its controversial plan to rescue Jews through economic incentives to the Reich never got off the ground, the council did help the JDC and other groups to sponsor exiles. The level of cooperation regarding refugees was undoubtedly welcome in light of other differences among Jewish organizations. Ultimately, however, not even this work was immune to division.
The Decline of Elite Leadership

Because the United States could not—or would not—absorb many refugees from Germany, the central question became where to send them. For Warburg and the JDC, the answer was simple: anywhere. Working with the League of Nations High Commission for German Refugees, for example, the JDC lobbied countries throughout the Western Hemisphere to open their borders, with little success. The most obvious answer, Palestine, became a divisive one, however. In America, the prospect of a Jewish home in Palestine had generally appealed to poorer and recently arrived Jews. For those who had already established themselves in American society—such as prominent members of the AJC—pushing for a state in Palestine offered more problems than solutions. Many feared that endorsing Zionism would only raise questions of loyalty. Equally important was the fact that Zionist groups constituted new rivals to traditional leadership.51

Since the early 1920s, Warburg had supported Jewish development in Palestine, but he eschewed political Zionism, which he considered antithetical to his assimilationist views. Ever a believer in the power of philanthropy, Warburg thought that generous investment alone might repair Arab-Jewish relations.52 In the 1930s, however, calls for a Jewish state increased in response to Nazism. Zionists consolidated control of both the Jewish Agency for Palestine and Hebrew University, a favorite charity of Warburg’s. As the unofficial leader of the non-Zionists, Warburg remained committed to Arab-Jewish coexistence. Many Zionists, including World Zionist Congress president Chaim Weizmann, increasingly favored a partition of Palestine. Warburg traveled to Zurich in August 1937 to plead his case to the Jewish Agency Council, but his opponents’ momentum was too great, and his efforts failed. Warburg died in October 1937, his plans for compromise in tatters. Warburg’s defeat, along with his death, symbolized a final phase in the transfer of Jewish-American leadership from the traditional elite to large, broad-based, and generally Zionist groups. Still, even Warburg’s critics acknowledged his work on behalf of Jewish communities. Commenting on the philanthropist’s death, Samuel Untermyer reflected that Warburg “could always be counted on” for charitable causes.53

Untermyer, already in poor health, curtailed his activism less than a year after Warburg’s death. It is apparent that, by the late 1930s, he had become alienated from the NSANL. In addition to differences of personality, not all boycott leaders agreed with his insistence on nonsectarianism, and the issue exacerbated existing divisions.54 Already disillusioned by apathy and disunity in December 1937, Untermyer vented his frustrations in his last major public address. He wondered aloud why “Americans generally have been so indolent, callous and short-sighted as to have failed … when they have within easy reach the means of self-protection for themselves and their brethren in Germany.” He resigned as president of the NSANL in April 1938. Until his death in March
1940, he fought to have his name removed from NSANL letterhead, a testament to both his prestige within the boycott movement and his alienation from it.55

Conclusion

There has been a long-running scholarly discussion over the failure of American Jews to oppose Nazism effectively.56 Historian Gulie Ne’eman Arad has specifically noted the ambivalence of Jewish German-Americans, who misunderstood the threat of Nazism. According to Arad, their position was a mixture of ongoing affinity for the German people and a view of the Jewish people as “eternal,” able to withstand yet another antisemitic regime.57 There is much in the stories of Untermyer and the Warburgs to support this assertion. Their identification with Germany, as demonstrated by their actions during and after World War I, informed their disparate reactions to Nazism. The American-born Untermyer based his advocacy of a boycott on the belief that economic pressure would spur the German nation to topple the Hitler regime. Felix Warburg, whose family in Germany made him leery of open confrontation, tried to protect German Jews by defusing tensions and, later, by trying to move them out of harm’s way until the threat passed. Over time, events showed that both men underestimated the Nazis’ staying power.

The careers of Untermyer and Warburg also reflect the weakening of elite leadership styles in Jewish organizational life at the same time that Nazi persecution boosted calls for a Jewish state. Warburg’s attempts to use elite power to protect Reich Jews, effect peace in Palestine, and unify Jewish communities brought hostility from other leaders. Untermyer’s leadership style, along with his commitment to nonsectarianism, similarly fostered infighting. As their stories help to show, the 1930s and 1940s saw the completion of the effort by broad-based groups to supplant the older style of philanthropic leadership.58

One must be careful, however, not to undervalue these leaders’ efforts in the 1930s. While the direct financial impact of the boycott is unclear, a study by Moshe Gottlieb has asserted that damaging the Reich’s economy was but one goal of the boycott. It severed symbolic ties to Germany, he argues, and helped to wrest Jewish-American leadership away from cautious elites. Furthermore, although Untermyer’s efforts did not stop the persecution of Reich Jews, they helped to bring the violence in Germany into the view of the American public, exacerbating a diplomatic problem for the Nazis.59

Nor can one dismiss the less confrontational activities undertaken by figures like Felix Warburg. He broadened the ideological range of support for refugee relief and Palestine aid, just as Untermyer did for the boycott. In addition, the efforts of the Warburg-led JDC yielded quantifiable results. In 1934 the JDC’s United Appeal campaign in New York funded the relocation of 17,000 German Jews. In 1935 the JDC gave nearly $1 million to relief efforts within the Reich and spent approximately the same amount on resettlement. Donations to the
JDC for refugee relief increased every year under Warburg’s leadership, reaching $2,374,062 in 1936. His own timidity and naïveté have brought valid criticism, but no one could deny the impact of a man who, along with his wife, personally donated over $13 million to charity.60

An epilogue to the Warburg story shows that ethnic identity grew more complicated in the late 1930s but that echoes of earlier years remained. A few months after the November 1938 Kristallnacht pogroms in Germany, Max Warburg emigrated to the United States, taking Felix’s place on the JDC’s executive committee. He worked closely with the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation to identify refugee scholars in need of aid, and he stressed the need to show the world “how many Germans … worked for honest democracy.” Felix’s son, Eddie, served intermittently as JDC chair from 1941 to 1965. National Socialism convinced him, like many others, of the need for a Jewish state, and in 1940 he reunited the JDC with the Zionists.61 His cousins James (Paul’s son) and Eric (Max’s son) served in the United States military during World War II. All three cousins lobbied against a harsh peace settlement at the war’s conclusion, and Eric even returned to the board of his family’s firm in Hamburg.62 In the postwar era, at least among the Warburgs, Germanness endured.

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Notes


4Portions of this article draw on chapter one of Gregory Kupsky, “‘The True Spirit of the German People’: German-Americans and National Socialism, 1919–1955,” doctoral dissertation (The Ohio State University, 2010).

5Hasia Diner concedes that the model of two waves, while oversimplified, carries a measure of validity. In her analysis, which is otherwise rich with statistical evidence, Diner does not place specific numbers on the Germanness of the 1820–1880 wave. Presumably because of the problems inherent in trying to quantify a hard-to-define pool of “German Jews,” Diner simply asserts that the 1820–1880 wave “tended to come heavily” from areas that eventually became Germany, or where “an urban elite [was] deeply influenced by German culture.” Diner, The Jews of the United States, 1654 to 2000 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 79. Elsewhere, Diner has described the German subgroup as a “slim majority” of the pre-1880


7A good overview of the Progressive Era is Arthur Link and Richard McCormick, Progressivism (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan-Davidson, 1983).


9Russell Kazal, Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 2. While Peter Connolly-Smith notes that World War I served as an easy scapegoat for an ethnic decline that actually started decades earlier, one cannot ignore the sharp decline in the number of German-American organizations and German-language media immediately before and during the war. Of 552 German newspapers in America in 1910, for example, approximately half remained in 1920. Connolly-Smith, Translating America: An Immigrant Press Visualizes American Popular Culture, 1895–1918 (Washington, DC: The Smithsonian Institution, 2004); Frederick Luebke, Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 271.


11Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation Sixth Annual Report, 30 April 1935, National Carl Schurz Association Papers, Box 44, Folder 2, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (hereafter cited as NCSA); Wilbur Thomas to Dietrich Gristede, 2 December 1935, Box 2, Folder 11, NCSA.


13Hawkins, “Zionist Project,” 114, 116, 119; Hawkins, “Hitler’s Bitterest Foe,” 22; “The Purim Association Ball,” New York Times (23 February 1902): 10; Untermyer to Paul Baerwald, 7 May 1920, MS-251, Box 1, Folder 1, AJA. See, for example, the letters in MS-251, Box 3, Folder 4, AJA.


Untermyer to Frank Cobb, 9 September 1919, MS-251, Box 1, Folder 4, AJA; George Sylvester Viereck to Samuel Untermyer, 1 August 1914, MS-457, Box 166, Folder 1, AJA; Untermyer, “Justice for German-Americans,” *American Weekly* (24 April 1918): 189; “Samuel Untermyer Shows How Germany Was Wronged at Versailles,” *American Monthly* (January 1925): 354; Statement on Untermyer by Jim Larkin, RG 59, Series 1930–1939, Box 4729, Folder 3, National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as NARA); Edward Russell, Randolph Guggenheimer, and Samuel Untermyer to Cordell Hull, 11 June 1938, RG 59, Series 1930–1939, Box 1671, File 362.115, NARA; Guggenheimer and Untermyer to State Department, 2 July 1940, and Paul Culbertson to Guggenheimer and Untermyer, 16 July 1940, RG 59, Series 1940–1944, Box 1246, File 362.1143/783, NARA.


“Mr. Warburg Urges Government Bank,” *New York Times* (14 November 1907): 8; Chernow, 86–90, 130–40; *Der Stürmer* (September 1938), quoted in Chernow, 474; Chernow, 216.

Chernow, 86, 99–101; JDC Statement on Felix Warburg, January 1917, MS-457, Box 168, Folder 16, AJA.

Heinrich Charles to Felix Warburg, 10 June 1914, MS-457, Box 165, Folder 1, AJA; J.P. Meyer to Warburg, 28 January 1916, MS-457, Box 168, Folder 15, AJA; Franz Boas to Members of Germanistic Society, 15 November 1920, MS-457, Box 188, Folder 4, AJA; Chernow, 168–169.

Chernow, 181–182, 186–189, 220, 223–224, 246, 249–252; “Warburg a Victim of War Prejudice,” *American Weekly* (18 September 1918): cover. On the Warburgs’ connections to the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, see Guest List, 8 May 1933, Box 1, Folder 3, NCSA; CSMF By-Laws, Box 1, Folder 10, NCSA; and M. Habrich to Helene Wittmann, 11 February 1932, and Joseph Marks to Wilbur Thomas, 27 July 1932, MS-457, Box 285, Folder 3, AJA.


Untermyer, “Germany’s Medieval Challenge.”


J.P. Meyer to Warburg, 5 October 1934; Warburg to Meyer, 8 October 1934; and German Society of New York to Warburg, 25 January 1934, MS-457, Box 295, Folder 8, AJA.
33Julius Meier to Warburg, 25 March 1933, and James Rosenberg to Meier, 26 March 1933, MS-457, Box 286, Folder 3, AJA; American Jewish Committee Memo, 28 April 1933, MS-457, Box 286, Folder 6, AJA; Memo of Conversation between Miss Emanuel and William Rosenwald, 21 May 1936, and John Whyte to Miss Emanuel, 5 December 1936, MS-457, Box 321, Folder 7, AJA.

34Hawkins, “‘Hitler’s Bitterest Foe,’” 24, 31; Untermyer, “Celebration of the Dedication Ceremonies Held at the Hebrew University,” 13 April 1933, MS-251, Box 4, Folder 9, AJA.

35Untermyer Statement on the Boycott, 18 September 1933, MS-251, Box 1, Folder 2, AJA.

36Untermyer to George Gordon Battle, 10 April 1935, MS-251, Box 1, Folder 2, AJA; Hawkins, “‘Hitler’s Bitterest Foe,’” 38.

37Jewish War Veterans Message to Ladies’ Auxiliaries, 10 September 1937, Bertha Corets Papers (MS-307), Box 1, Folder 2, AJA; List of Auxiliaries That Did Not Respond to Boycott Questionnaire, undated, Box 1, Folder 5, Ms-307, AJA; Hawkins, “‘Hitler’s Bitterest Foe,’” 27–29, 32.

38Hawkins, “‘Hitler’s Bitterest Foe,’” 39–41; Moshe Gottlieb, American Anti-Nazi Resistance, 1933–1941: An Historical Analysis (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1981), 226; Minutes of Inter-State Conference of NSANL, 7 March 1937, MS-307, Box 1, Folder 2, AJA.

39Warburg to Hans Meyer, 3 April 1933, MS-307, Box 285, Folder 14, AJA; Chernow, 372–373; Warburg to Louis Rittenberg, 8 August 1933, MS-307, Box 288, Folder 8, AJA; Joseph Proskauer to Committee on Policy, 22 May 1933, and Warburg to Proskauer, 24 May 1933, MS-457, Box 287, Folder 2, AJA; “$2,000,000 Sought to Aid Reich Jews,” New York Times (20 May 1933): 2.

40B’nai Brith reversed course in 1937, however, and thereafter supported the boycott. Gottlieb, American Anti-Nazi Resistance, 341.

41Statement, “Shall The Jews Engage in an Official Boycott Against Germany?” 17 August 1933, MS-457, Box 287, Folder 1, AJA; Memo, “Counter Boycott Propaganda,” undated, MS-457, Box 286, Folder 8, AJA.

42Hawkins, “Zionist Project,” 121, 132, 134–136, 141; Correspondence between Untermyer and Warburg, June 1935, MS-457, Box 307, Folder 10, AJA; Untermyer to Jonah Wise, 24 November 1933, MS-457, Box 291, Folder 11, AJA.

43Untermyer, “The Economic Boycott of Germany,” 27 June 1933, MS-251, Box 4, Folder 9, AJA.

44“Untermyer Turns Attack upon Hull,” New York Times (4 November 1933): 8; Hawkins, “‘Hitler’s Bitterest Foe,’” 25–26; Untermyer to Samuel Dickstein, 3 May 1934, Samuel Dickstein Papers (MS-8), Box 5, Folder 6, AJA.

45William Dodd to Stephen Wise, 1 August 1933, William Dodd Papers, Box 43, Folder 7, Library of Congress; Dodd to Leo Wormser, 26 September 1933, William Dodd Papers, Box 43, Folder 6, Library of Congress; Cordell Hull to Louis Howe, 6 September 1933, Papers as President, Official File, File 198-a, Box 2, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library.

46The detractors included Rabbi Stephen Wise of the American Jewish Congress. See the public statement by Felix Warburg, 9 August 1933, Ms-457, Box 285, Folder 14, AJA.


48Warburg to Hans Meyer, 3 April 1933 and 11 April 1933, MS-457, Box 285, Folder 14, AJA; Chernow, 402–403.

49Concert Program, 28 September 1933, MS-457, Box 291, Folder 10; Jonah Wise Fundraising Letter, 23 November 1933, and Form Letter, 28 July 1933, MS-457, Box 291, Folder 11, AJA.

51Chernow, 292–296; Address by Felix Warburg in St. Louis, Missouri, 25 January 1936, MS-457, Box 319, Folder 4, AJA.
55Hawkins, “Hitler’s Bitterest Foe,” 49–50; B. Dubovsky to E.W. Russell, 27 April 1938, and E.W. Russell to NSANL, 28 April 1938, MS-251, Box 1, Folder 2, AJA; Dubovsky to Untermyer, 13 May 1939, and Untermyer to Dubovsky, 11 May 1939, MS-251, Box 1, Folder 3, AJA.
61Chernow, 512, 602; Max Warburg to Wilbur Thomas, 14 September 1944, Box 41, Folder 11, NCSA.
Barnet Hodes’s Quest to Remember Haym Salomon, the Almost-Forgotten Jewish Patriot of the American Revolution

Christopher J. Young

“For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.”

President George Washington to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, Rhode Island, 1790

“Sculpture is a difficult and expensive craft; monuments are not erected by a community without good and sufficient reason.”

Lorado Taft (1860–1936)

On a cold December day in 1980, the hearse carrying the body of Barnet Hodes made its way to Heald Square at the intersection of Wabash Avenue and Wacker Drive in downtown Chicago. The park, which is slightly west of the footprint of Fort Dearborn, is situated just northeast of the LaSalle Street office where Hodes had worked during the 1930s and 1940s as counsel for the city of Chicago and as the co-chair (and primary force) of the Patriotic Foundation of Chicago.

But it was not the office that the driver of the hearse had in mind when he approached the small, triangular, traffic-dividing park near the Chicago River. There, in that park, stood an impressive monument depicting three men in American-Revolutionary-era garb. Standing hand-in-hand were bronze representations of George Washington, Robert Morris, and Haym Salomon—“this great triumvirate of patriots,” as President Franklin Delano Roosevelt described the three American revolutionaries in a letter that was read at the monument’s dedication in 1941. When the cortege stopped before the trio of sculpted patriots, the family of Barnet Hodes stepped out of the vehicle and placed a wreath at the foot of the large granite base that exhibited President Washington’s comforting words to a Jewish Congregation in Rhode Island and a bas-relief of a seated Lady Liberty welcoming people of different ethnicities to America. As Hodes’s son, Scott, would later remember, that is what his dad would have liked. And he was right.

What follows is the story of Hodes’s quest during the 1930s and early 1940s to have the statue erected to memorialize the patriotic activities of financier
Historian John Bodnar argues that public memory emerges from the mediation of tensions seemingly inherent in the official and the vernacular forces in society. Official culture, Bodnar explains, “promotes a nationalistic, patriotic culture of the whole that mediates an assortment of vernacular interests,” while vernacular culture “represents an array of specialized interests that are grounded in parts of the whole.”

While usually articulated as a clash of interests between these two elements, the conflict involved in shaping public memory can also bring into relief deep fissures that exist within the vernacular culture (in this case, an ethnic community), not just a national community, as Beth Wenger skillfully demonstrates in her work on the attempts to commemorate Salomon in New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles during the twentieth century.

Commemoration during the 1930s was generally forged by middle-class professionals who had a stake in the dominant culture. As a rising star in the Democratic Party in Chicago, attorney Hodes fit this description. Defying the national trend, machine politics in Chicago actually became stronger during the New Deal, and Mayor Edward Kelly successfully built ethnic coalitions and co-opted potential ethnic rivals, as had his assassinated predecessor, Anton Cermak. Kelly brought into his circle two Jewish Chicagoans, Jacob Arvey and his law partner, Hodes. Kelly and Arvey were also members of the Patriotic Foundation of Chicago, an organization committed to fostering “the historical fact that peoples of all groups participated patriotically in the founding and building of America.”

As a political and cultural leader with a stake in stability and the continuation of the status quo, Hodes was clearly part of the official commemorative force to which Bodnar refers. As such, Hodes articulated the official interests by expressing his vision of unity, or what society “should be like.” Conversely, as a member of B’nai B’rith and with a known association with two Chicago synagogues—including a stint as president of the South Shore Temple—Hodes was a leading member of an ethnic and religious group with its own interests and concerns and, therefore, can be considered a representative of the vernacular, as well. As such, he was a member of a social group during the 1930s whose senses were alive to what “social reality feels like.”

Instead of being at the center of a struggle, Hodes served as a bridge between the potentially contentious forces of the official and the vernacular. As a cultural and political leader employed by the city of Chicago, Hodes represented “the official.” It was in his capacity as city counsel that Hodes advocated for the monument as well as sent and received mail on behalf of the Patriotic Foundation of Chicago. As a member of an ethnic and religious group that was one of the “specialized interests” that made up American society, Hodes also represented “the vernacular.” His quest to make the Jewish story part of the
American narrative by building a patriotic monument in downtown Chicago (as opposed to in an ethnic neighborhood) that celebrated a Jewish American revolutionary alongside Washington and Morris demonstrates that the official and the vernacular were not so easily distinguishable.  

This is not to say that opposition to the project was totally absent. There was opposition, but it was minimal and did not take on the intensity surrounding an attempt to erect a statue of Salomon in New York City during the 1920s and early 1930s. In fact, people from all walks of life wrote to Hodes from across the country encouraging him to finish the project, even giving him leads to pursue regarding historical artifacts that might help his cause. Bodnar’s observation that “symbolic language of patriotism is central to public memory in the United States” is clear in this case. Hodes discussed his project in patriotic language and firmly believed that the project was of central importance to American Jewry. Rather than illustrating a serious conflict within the Jewish community or within the larger national community of which it was a part, Hodes’s quest for the Washington-Morris-Salomon monument rode a wave of Americanism and patriotism that began to emerge in the 1930s and early 1940s, as international events and the rise of fascism threatened American life.  

Those who were involved either directly or indirectly in the project at the time recognized that the statue was meant to signify the Jewish contribution to the American experience. Today the impressive sculpture stands—with thousands of Chicagoans and tourists passing it each day—as a testament to the significant role that Jews played in the opening act of the United States of America. That Hodes, a member of this vernacular interest, played a leading role in the project was not meant to detract from, but rather add to, the case that unity between ethnic groups as well as between civilians and the military led to the unlikely American victory over the British. Like the project’s intended message, the Washington-Morris-Salomon sculpture’s very existence testifies to Hodes’s commitment and ability to bring together people from a broad spectrum of American society in order to bring the monument to a successful completion during another era that would “try men’s souls.”

**Beginnings**

Born in Poland in 1900, Hodes migrated to the United States as a child with his parents five years later. Growing up in LaSalle, Illinois, just over ninety miles from his adopted hometown of Chicago, Hodes dreamed of honoring the Jewish Revolutionary patriot, Haym Salomon. While studying American history in high school, Hodes, the only Jewish student in his class, wondered why Jews were not part of the American story as it was taught in school. Possibly influenced by the writings of the Protestant Rev. Madison C. Peters, who wrote a number of books about the importance of Jews in American history, young Hodes was particularly intrigued by Salomon, the financial and linguistic wizard who had given his financial all to the revolutionary cause.
Chicago sculptor, Lorado Taft, with an initial model for the Washington-Morris-Salomon Memorial
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

Barnet Hodes showing the model to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Governor Henry Horner, Illinois's first Jewish governor
(Courtesy Chicago History Museum)

Cover of brochure for the Patriotic Foundation of Chicago
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

Cover of Program for the Unveiling and Dedication of the Washington-Morris-Salomon Monument
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

Detail of Washington-Morris-Salomon Memorial
(Courtesy Michael Ball, Initiate Marketing, Inc.)
Unveiling of postage stamp commemorating Haym Salomon with Chicago Postmaster Emmett Cooper, left, and Barnet Hodes, right
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

Sculptor Leonard Crunelle showing his work to Barnet Hodes, Paul H. Douglas, and Lorado Taft’s daughter, Emily Taft Douglas
(Courtesy Chicago History Museum)

Below: “Haym Salomon Lives Again,” a cartoon depiction of Barnet Hodes at the unveiling of the Washington-Morris-Salomon Monument
(Courtesy Chicago History Museum)
Salomon emigrated from Poland to New York City before war broke out between Great Britain and the thirteen colonies. He used his position as a shop-keeper to inform the American army about the British occupiers. In 1778 British forces arrested Salomon as a spy and sentenced him to death. As he awaited his fate in one of the infamous prisoner-of-war ships that floated ominously in Wallabout Bay along the Brooklyn shore, the British Army realized that Salomon was multilingual and therefore could be of some assistance. He was particularly helpful as a translator for the British in their interactions with Hessian troops and French prisoners of war. In time, however, the British realized that under Salomon’s watch American and French prisoners began to escape. After Salomon orchestrated numerous escapes, he, too, fled, making his way to Philadelphia, where he remained for the rest of his life. There he forged connections with Founding Fathers such as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Eventually, Salomon earned the attention and confidence of the American Confederacy’s Finance Minister Robert Morris. During the remainder of the war, Salomon gained fame for his financial acumen, especially brokering bills of exchange, as well as for his generosity toward delegates to the Continental Congress while they labored in Philadelphia under personal financial constraints.

Hodes had an affinity with Salomon; both were Polish Jews who were intensely patriotic. When Hodes moved to Evanston, Illinois, to study law at Northwestern University and eventually made his home and career in Chicago, his idea to rectify the historical gap of the Jewish revolutionary story remained with him. The idea finally came to a head when he and fellow Chicagoleans spearheaded an organization called the Patriotic Foundation of Chicago, which hoped “to strengthen the traditional spirit of American unity.” Founded in July 1936, this group, whose membership consisted of Jews and gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, philanthropists and politicians, business leaders and artists, set out to make Hodes’s dream a reality.

They were able to do so because of the organization’s strategy of depicting three men of different heritage rather than one. This decision was in part due to an earlier controversy that took place within the New York City Jewish community when a group called the Federation of Polish Jews (formerly known as the Federation of Polish Hebrews) proposed erecting a statue to honor Salomon as a Polish “immigrant hero.” The proposal, offered in 1925, was rejected by the New York Art Commission because of design issues as well as a lack of historically significant evidence to support the federation’s claims. The group tried again a few years later and this time met with more success—at least from the New York Art Commission. However, until the project’s eventual demise in the mid-1930s, the Federation of Polish Jews was dogged by a formidable opposition within the more established Jewish community in New York City, including Max Kohler of the American Jewish Historical Society. The opposition had hoped that the federation would be willing to erect a monument that included
other Jewish patriots of the American Revolution, but the federation refused. It was adamant that the statue be a monument to the Polish Jewish patriot in order to inspire future generations of similar heritage. The federation’s attempt to mitigate opposition by commissioning Charles E. Russell, who had recently won a Pulitzer Prize, to write a book on Salomon failed. “At stake in the debate over the monument was not only the memory of Haym Salomon,” historian Beth Wenger observes, “but a power struggle between different sectors of the Jewish community.” The debate over the memorial honoring Salomon “fundamentally centered on Salomon’s symbolic meaning within two American Jewish cultures and their differing beliefs about public expressions of Jewish identity.”

The wrangle in New York exposed the division that existed between the recently arrived Polish Jews and more established groups of American and ethnic Jews, especially those from Germany. Those opposed to the idea of honoring Salomon with a statue feared that a lack of historical evidence to support his presumed heroic efforts could invite criticism of both the statue and the Jewish community that erected it. Choosing an individual with a sketchy historical record to depict the Jewish contribution (or the Polish Jewish contribution in particular) to the American Revolution would, they worried, make them vulnerable to accusations that the Jews’ role in the founding of the American nation was at best minimal.

As Hodes frequently pointed out, he was aware of the New York situation and set out to avoid a similar outcome in Chicago. Consequently, the proposed—and eventual—statue did not celebrate Salomon the Man or Salomon the Jew or Salomon the Hero of the American Revolution; rather, a statue featuring Salomon was meant to symbolize the role of minority groups in the founding of the United States. (By minority groups, however, Hodes made it clear in his correspondence that he meant Jews.) In the wake of the failed attempt by the Federation of Polish Jews in New York City, the decision to link Salomon to Washington and Morris was a clever one that led to success in Chicago. Hodes’s activities and strategy suggest that he was determined not to have a repeat of the New York debacle. The key was to present to Chicago not a Jewish monument, but an American one; not a monument that celebrated a Jewish-American hero in particular, but one that displayed in bronze the American values of diversity and unity as exemplified by Jewish participation. While the unique statue depicting the three patriots was meant to reinforce Americanism, it remained (and remains) for many, especially in the Jewish-American community, a statue dedicated to the memory of a Jewish patriot of the American Revolution.

An American Project with Jewish Urgency

With antisemitism running rampant in Europe and becoming increasingly virulent in America, friends of Hodes and well-wishers from across the country expressed that a permanent reminder of the Jewish contribution to the American story was needed more than ever. Hodes clearly agreed.
To create the statue, Hodes approached Lorado Taft, one of the nation’s premier sculptors. The artist was known in the Chicago area for pieces such as *Eternal Silence* (1908), *Fountain of the Great Lakes* (1913), and *The Fountain of Time* (1922). Throughout his career, Taft focused a number of his works on historical figures, including *Schuyler Colfax* (1887), *General Ulysses S. Grant* (1889), *George Washington* (1908), *Black Hawk* (1911), and *Lincoln, The Young Lawyer* (1927). When Hodes made his request, Taft, a gentile descendant of American revolutionaries, happily agreed to the commission.¹⁷

The two men no doubt were acutely aware of the growing antisemitism in a city that was home to roughly 300,000 Jews—especially as manifested by groups such as the Chicago chapter of the German-American Bund, which, led by Fritz Kuhn, spouted Nazi propaganda. The Bund, which ceased to exist the day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, was not the only force of antisemitism in the United States during the Great Depression. Others, such as Father Charles Coughlin, preyed on American anxieties during the Great Depression and offered up a favorite scapegoat for popular consumption—Jews. The popularity of such men and their ideas were, according to one scholar, “a symptom of the weakened state of American democracy.” Moreover, during the 1930s the rise of groups characterized by their antisemitic sentiments and profascist beliefs bode gravely on the American public mind. Americans increasingly suspected that people in their midst, including their neighbors, were engaged in traitorous activity. In fact, according to a Gallup poll taken in 1940, nearly half of Americans believed that people making up a fifth column were part of their communities. Stuningly, only 26 percent of Americans polled felt that fifth columnists had not penetrated their neighborhoods. So, it is not surprising that for those living at this time in the United States it did not seem farfetched to think that a “dangerous, anti-democratic Trojan Horse” was in the making.¹⁸

The creeping antisemitism was very much on the mind of those who wished to see the project move forward. At a luncheon fundraiser at Chicago’s Standard Club, Richard Gutstadt, the executive director of the Anti-Defamation League of the B’nai B’rith, reported that Premier Hermann William Goering himself announced at the Nuremberg Congress that “the Swastika was no longer the emblem of Nazi Germany but was rather becoming the symbol of the world’s determination to exterminate Jews; that that was seriously intended and was not merely Nazi ballyhoo.” Time was of essence, Gutstadt told the crowd assembled to raise funds for the Washington-Morris-Salomon monument. Gutstadt argued that the proposed memorial would serve an educational purpose and help save democracy. And it was American democracy that acted as a safeguard for Jews as well as other minority groups, such as Catholics. The statue, according to Gutstadt, will be a “concrete manifestation that all who see may understand that the philosophy of our democracy and the development of this great government is … the product of the genius of the representatives of all groups who were
here at the time the Revolutionary concept was first born, and who have made
their contribution from that time down to the present day.”

While attempting to reach out to a broad audience by emphasizing diver-
sity, the speech was a thinly veiled message to the Jews in the audience. As
such, Gutstadt concluded his talk by wondering aloud if a city of four million,
including over 300,000 Jews, would step up to raise the necessary $50,000.
“Are we going to dedicate ourselves to this purpose which transcends Jewish
interest, which transcends civic pride, to this purpose which is thoroughly and
truly American in its implications?” Gutstadt exhorted, adding: “Are we going
to rise to the needs of the occasion and make this magnificent and permanent
artistic concept a reality for Chicago?” The speaker hoped that by encouraging
the vernacular interest to bind itself with the official, the Washington-Morris-
Salomon project would meet with success. Hodes must have been heartened
and deeply satisfied as he listened to Gutstadt.19

Hodes and Taft no doubt hoped that the monument would serve as an
antidote to antisemitic threats to American democracy. According to his son-
in-law, Taft “became increasingly concerned during the last two years of his life
about the anti-semitic movement in the country . . . [and] became constantly
more indignant as he saw some of the cunning attempts to stir up anti-semitism
by reactionary and unAmerican groups, and he was very anxious to do what
he could to help counteract these attempts.”20 A realistic and concerned Hodes
discussed with Taft a way to protect what would be an obvious target for Nazi
supporters and other antisemites. They concluded that they would have the
patriots join hands. Besides giving the finished product a striking appearance it
would, at the same time, underscore the message of unity, as well as minimize
the chances that the statue of Salomon would be harmed. Hodes later said
that he “went to Lorado Taft and induced him to interlock Washington’s and
Salomon’s arms. In that way,” Hodes continued, “any disfigurement of Salomon
would also have injured Washington, and would have been a national disgrace.”21

Having commissioned the statue and seen the model, Hodes was determined
to defend the historical record of Salomon and set out to gather as much infor-
mation as possible. Again, the New York controversy remained on his mind.
He received an unexpected boost from a Warner Brothers “patriotic short” that
appeared in 1939, titled Sons of Liberty, which won an Oscar the following year.
Directed by Michael Curliz and starring Claude Rains, the film focused on the
patriotic services of Salomon and was a rare instance when a Jewish character
was portrayed in a motion picture. In fact, as Randi Hokett, the director of
the Warner Bros. Archives at the University of Southern California, observed,
Sons of Liberty “stands out” because of its synagogue scene, which was “bold
imagery in a time when Jewish identity had been largely eliminated from the
American movie screen.”22
Hollywood’s silence regarding the rise of Nazism in Germany as well as the antisemitism at home was strange and surprising, and Harry Warner was determined to counter it. Warner, the lesser-known sibling of the famed Warner Brothers, was adamant about getting the word out regarding the ominous trend toward Jews. Described by his daughter as “a very serious, moral man,” Warner, like Hodes, had a natural connection with the revolutionary patriot Haym Salomon. Like Salomon, Warner was a Polish Jewish immigrant who hoped to aid America during a time of crisis. *Sons of Liberty*, which could be shown free of charge in places of worship or educational institutions, was, according to historian Michael Birdwell, “a tonic to the rising tide of domestic anti-Semitism, for it assured viewers that Jews were as patriotic as Christians and loved their country just as dearly.” This observation closely resembles Hodes’s driving sentiment. Moreover, Birdwell’s conclusion that “Haym Salomon, then, could easily be interpreted as a filmic embodiment of Harry Warner” could just as easily be said about Hodes and the statue that was eventually erected in downtown Chicago.23

“The Project will be Completed”

The Washington-Morris-Salomon statue was the last commissioned work of Lorado Taft. The artist embraced the project because he enthusiastically believed in the mission of the Patriotic Foundation of Chicago. However, he was unable to see it to its completion. The famed sculptor died in October 1936 only having completed a maquette. As Taft lay dying, he extracted a promise from his son-in-law, Paul H. Douglas, professor of economics at the University of Chicago and future war hero and U.S. senator, that it would be completed. Douglas assured his father-in-law that he would contact Hodes to make sure that he and the Patriotic Foundation of Chicago were on board with continuing the project should Taft die. The next day Douglas (falsely) reported back to the sculptor that he had discussed the issue with Hodes, who had affirmed his commitment to completing the project. Comforted by this information, Taft took his son-in-law’s hand and confided, “If the memorial can be finished I can die happy.” Within fifteen minutes, the sculptor closed his eyes, never to regain consciousness again. He died four days later. In the days following Taft’s death a desperate Douglas contacted supporters to urge on the project to its completion—even admitting to them that he had told Taft a white lie in order to grant the artist his dying wish.24

Douglas set to work right away to fulfill his promise. He wrote letter after letter to friends explaining the need to see the project through. Interestingly, those in charge had to decide between two major projects that Taft was involved with at the time—the Fountain of Creation and the Washington-Morris-Salomon statue—to make sure that at least one would be completed. Douglas and Taft’s widow, Ada Bartlett, decided to move forward on the Patriotic
Foundation of Chicago project, since the sculptor was passionate about the fight against prejudice and it was his dying wish that it be completed. Sculptor and former Taft student Leonard Crunelle took on the task of turning Taft’s model into a monument.25

The project continued to move forward. In 1938, Hodes embarked on a letter-writing campaign to forty-six governors and U.S. senators, explaining the purpose of the project and encouraging his fellow politicians to write letters of support. The response was everything that Hodes could have wished for. The co–chair of the Patriotic Foundation of Chicago would later use these letters to demonstrate the widespread support the project enjoyed.26

Judging by the politicians’ comments—which ranged from the prosaic to the eloquent—a number of the governors and senators sounded genuinely inspired by the project. U.S. Senator Richard Russell applauded Hodes’s project as a reminder that “no section nor strain has a monopoly in patriotism or in our record of achievement” as a nation. James Davis, U.S. senator from Pennsylvania, commented that “many racial strains which have been dedicated in this great land to the cause of constitutional government and free enterprise. . . . have blended their splendid forces to provide the drive towards higher levels of human happiness in an orderly way.” Elbert Thomas, U.S. senator from Utah, added a personal touch to his letter to Hodes:

As a son of a mother and a father who both immigrated to America with the purpose of coming to a land which would furnish a home for those who wished to worship as they saw fit, to think as they wished, and to help build a lasting monument in a governmental way to democracy in all its possibilities, I rejoice in your undertaking. May our country ever remain the land of opportunities your monument symbolizes.

Interestingly, Florida’s Senator Claude Pepper wrote that the monument to “honor our early American patriots is just the vital force we need today to awaken our generation to patriotic consciousness which will weld them together in a common fight against another tyrant—the depression.” Governor Harry Nice of Maryland stated that “Chicago’s graphic symbol in memory of . . . Salomon’s service makes me pause to give recognition to the fact that our country is a beautiful Mosaic of all social and religious patterns.”27 Nearly all of the letters made a point of praising Hodes (or the proposed memorial) for rescuing the memory of Salomon while acknowledging the crucial service the Polish-Jewish immigrant played in the revolutionary drama.

Hodes’s letter-writing campaign continued during the fall of 1939, when he sent a brief article to leading newspapers and periodicals describing the project. He requested the public to inform him of any leads regarding material on Salomon. On the same day he sent letters to chairs of history departments at leading American academic institutions asking if they or anyone they knew,
including graduate students, were in possession of historical information regarding Salomon. He sent letters to leading citizens as well, such as John Pershing, the general of the armies; Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., war hero and leading founder of the American Legion; Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter; and President Franklin D. Roosevelt, informing them of the project. In return, he received expressions of support from these towering Americans.28

This, of course, does not mean that all politicians supported the project. The well-respected Congressman Emanuel Celler, of Brooklyn, wrote to a mutual friend that he opposed the proposed statue in New York City and he opposed this one as well for the same reason: He believed there was not enough information to justify a statue of Salomon. While Celler agreed that Salomon was a patriot, he had his concerns, which he expressed in no uncertain terms. The congressman thought there were plenty of other individuals who were more deserving but were not having a statue erected in their honor. Like the opposition group in New York City, he worried that the Salomon statue would stoke the rabid antisemites in America who had a bully pulpit—namely, Father Coughlin.29

In a letter to the congressman (via the same mutual friend), Hodes confidently fired back, stating that he was well aware of the arguments regarding the historical Salomon. For Hodes and the Patriotic Foundation of Chicago, Morris’s frequent acknowledgment of Salomon’s assistance during the War for Independence was enough to justify permanently displaying the three men together for posterity. He posited that the Jewish patriot served to represent the Jewish contribution—among others—and emphasized that Salomon was “included in the monument as a symbol of all the many Jews who were in America at the time of the Revolution.” Hodes’s response was a shrewd one, for even the opposing sides in New York City were able to agree on Salomon’s symbolic value.30

By 1940, the Patriotic Foundation of Chicago had already raised the $50,000 needed to fund the project—a remarkable feat considering the shrinking payrolls over the previous decade. Chicago, a population with a foreign-born majority, led the state of Illinois in unemployment. At one point in the early 1930s, 40 percent of Chicagoans were unemployed. Fortunately, as the decade wore on, Chicago benefited from a generous amount of New Deal funding, thanks to the mutually beneficial relationship between the popular Mayor Kelly and the even more popular President Roosevelt. While a few affluent individuals offered to pay for the statue, Hodes believed that the spirit with which the statue was being erected demanded that people across the social and economic spectrum contribute, even if it took longer to accomplish. Consequently, the funds were raised by popular subscription as well as fundraisers. A confident Hodes informed inquirers in 1940 that he expected the statue to be completed and erected sometime in the spring, and then late summer. In the end, the statue would not be completed for another year.31
Conclusion

On 15 December 1941, the Washington-Morris-Salomon statue was dedicated in Chicago. Ostensibly the purpose of the monument was to symbolize that the success of the War for Independence was achieved through tolerance, diversity, sacrifice, and unity—the united efforts of different ethnic groups as well as the cooperation between the military and civilians. The monument was imagined, in the words of its sculptor, Lorado Taft, as "a powerful sermon in bronze and granite of the importance" of unity amongst America’s diverse people and "in crucial times, of civilian as well as military sacrifice and preparedness." The message of Hodes and the Patriotic Foundation of Chicago was especially important on this day in Chicago, when the attack on Pearl Harbor, which had taken place just a week earlier, was still foremost on everyone’s minds. Timed to coincide with the anniversary of the Bill of Rights, and coincidentally, with the first day of Chanukah, the statue’s message became even more pertinent as a new war would demand participation from all ethnic groups and cooperation between the military and civilian populations at an unprecedented level. Moreover, the ominous developments in Europe that portended grave fears for American Jewry brought a sharp urgency to the project.

Chicagoans dutifully followed President Roosevelt’s proclamation encouraging Americans to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Bill of Rights—the first ten amendments to a Constitution that Haym Salomon did not live to experience. Throughout the day, gatherings took place all over the city. Mayor Kelly found himself running between functions, which were sometimes separated by only a matter of blocks. At 11:30 AM people began to gather at Heald Square. Movie stars, well-known radio and theater performers, and the United States Navy Band entertained the crowd as they waited for the program to begin at 1:00. By the time it started, five thousand people had assembled to witness the dedication of the Washington-Morris-Salomon monument. Thousands more listened to the program as it was boomed over the “State street amplification system” that was arranged to maximize the number who could hear “the downtown observances program.”

Those in attendance watched the presentation of colors and listened to speeches from politicians, military officials, and religious figures, including a Presbyterian minister, a Roman Catholic priest, and a rabbi from Congregation Mikveh Israel of Philadelphia, the religious community to which Salomon once belonged. The need for unity to defeat the latest enemy of American liberties was the day’s theme. Diversity and tolerance as bulwarks of American strength continued to be emphasized, as they had been since the Patriotic Foundation of Chicago’s campaign began. Now, on this wintry afternoon, the speakers and their audience were linked to the American War for Independence in a way that few could have imagined just weeks before. However, the public celebration and dedication of the monument deemphasized Salomon’s Jewishness. In fact, the
A pamphlet that was prepared for the day fails to make any specific reference to Jewish participation in the War for Independence or to Salomon as a Jew. While this was in stark contrast to the letters and newspaper articles that discussed the project from its conception through its dedication, it was exactly what Hodes had planned to do to make this monument a success. His Jewish hero of the American Revolution would be on an American monument, not a Jewish one.  

Unity and American values in the face of tyranny was the message of the day, even while war preparation was in the air and people braced for the dark reality that would soon make itself known. Seemingly, the official had eclipsed the vernacular. However, Hodes’s quest to have Salomon remembered demonstrates that a tension is not necessary between the official and the vernacular as the public memory of a person or an event emerges. At the gathering in downtown Chicago, Jewish and gentile Americans in and out of government celebrated their shared country, their shared past, and each other.

During the height of Hodes’s campaign for the Jewish American revolutionary, a writer for the New York Times reportedly quipped that Salomon was the “most remembered forgotten man in history.” Today, it may be tempting to think that he is simply forgotten. As long as the statue stands, however, the possibility exists that each person who walks by it and takes notice of the unusual name will enfold the Jewish patriot into his or her historical memory—so that rather than being forgotten, Salomon will be, as Senator William Smathers of New Jersey said in 1938, the “almost forgotten patriot” of the American Revolution.

Appendix

Members of The Patriotic Foundation of Chicago, C. 1936

Mayor Edward J. Kelly, Honorary Chairman
Colonel A. A. Sprague, Co-Chairman
Barnet Hodes, Co-Chairman
Edgar L. Schnadig, Executive Vice Chairman
Laurence H. Armour, Treasurer
Lorado Taft, Sculptor
Capt. Jack Reilly, Executive Secretary

Executive-Advisory Committee

Dr. Edward E. Ames  Maurice Berkson  Henry P. Chandler
J.M. Arvey  A. Berstein  Dr. Henry Cheney
Fred Ascher  Fred Berstein  Wm. Citron
I. Baumgartl  William Scott Bond  Ralph Clarkson
N.B. Bederman  Britton I. Budd  Joseph B. David
Louis Behr  Oscar S. Caplan  Dr. Joseph B. De Lee
Christopher J. Young is an assistant professor at Indiana University Northwest, where he teaches early American history. His published work has covered a variety of topics, including Mary K. Goddard, Baltimore’s postmistress during the American Revolution; Dr. Benjamin Rush’s dreams; and the clash of subcultures during Disco Demolition Night on Chicago’s South Side in 1979.

Notes
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5Beth S. Wenger, “Sculpting an American Jewish Hero: The Monuments, Myths, and Legends of Haym Salomon” in *Divergent Jewish Cultures: Israel and America*, ed. Deborah Dash Moore and S. Ilan Troen (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 123–151. The consensus involved in shaping myths and memory is often overshadowed by the focus on conflict. For instance, in her insightful essay on the battle over the memory of Salomon within the American Jewish community, Wenger characterizes the history as a conflict even though a majority of the attempts to erect a statue of Salomon that she writes about were successful and without serious or overwhelming contention. While statues of Salomon went up in Chicago and Los Angeles without much of a hitch, the attempt in New York, which preceded both, was a source of internecine conflict.


8It is likely that the city’s law department, which was—and still is—housed in a building at 33 N. LaSalle Street, doubled as the headquarters of the Patriotic Foundation of Chicago. Not only was correspondence regarding the project sent and received by Hodes at this address, a letter from the Patriotic Foundation of Chicago’s executive secretary, Jack Reilly, is on foundation letterhead that uses the address 33 N. LaSalle Street. See Reilly to Benjamin Davis, 22 September 1936, Haym Salomon File, AJA. When Wacker Drive was reconfigured in 2003, the Washington-Morris-Salomon statue was moved from the medianlike park to the other side of Wacker—a matter of yards. It is now in a more accessible area along the Chicago River. Unlike the Chicago statue, which has remained part of the cityscape of downtown Chicago, the statue of Salomon in Los Angeles has moved a number of times over the last half century, following the movement of the Jewish community within the city. See “Statue Gets Around,” 11 November 2005, http://www.forward.com/articles/2221/ (accessed 20 January 2011). See also “Haym Salomon Statue Re-Dedication,” 12 June 2008, http://www.tomlabonge.com/news/story/164 (accessed 20 January 2011).


14This account of the New York controversy is drawn from Wenger, “Sculpting an American Jewish Hero,” 129–137 (quotes are on pp. 135 and 137).
Ibid. Hodes emphasized the Jewish contribution to the American Revolutionary War far more than Wenger suggests. For similar concerns held by Chicago Jews that their community would be “accused of synthetically creating a national hero out of Ham Salomon,” see Paul H. Douglas to Hamlin Garland, 30 November 1936, Lorado Taft Papers, Box 11, University Archives, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois (hereafter “University Archives”).

For instance, the logo for the Chicago Jewish Historical Society depicts a Chicago skyline peppered with Jewish landmarks, including the Washington-Morris-Salomon statue. See http://www.chicagojewishhistory.org (accessed 14 July 2010). This author suspects that for the general American population Salomon does not hold any more meaning than lesser-known participants in the War for Independence. A perusal of relevant archival collections leads one to believe that Salomon is remembered mainly in the American Jewish community as a hero of the American Revolution, whereas knowledge of him in the general American public remains limited. While the statue has the potential to constantly introduce and reintroduce Salomon to the general public, Hodes’s hope—that “names such as Salomon, which heretofore have had an association that is purely Jewish, will take on an association that is American” —remains partially unfulfilled. Hodes to Walter Kraus, 12 July 1940, Box 10, folder 12, Chicago History Museum.


Richard E. Gutstadt, “A Picture for the Future…” [1930s], Barnet Hodes Papers, Box 10, Folder 14, Chicago History Museum.

Paul H. Douglas to Alfred S. Alschuler, 30 November 1936, Lorado Taft Papers, Box 11, University Archives.


Paul H. Douglas to Alfred S. Alschuler, 30 November 1936 and Paul H. Douglas to Hamlin Garland, 30 November 1936, Lorado Taft Papers, Box 11, University Archives.
Paul H. Douglas to Albion Headburg, 30 November 1936, Lorado Taft Papers, Box 11, University Archives. Taft envisioned his Fountain of Creation sitting at the east end of the Midway in the Hyde Park neighborhood opposite of his masterpiece, Fountain of Time, which sits on the west end near Washington Park. As a result of the decision to move forward on the Washington-Morris-Salomon monument, the Fountain of Creation was never completed. Pieces can be located on the campus of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, including at the main library’s front entrance.

Pacyga, *Chicago: A Biography*, 265, 267. Of the twenty-five U.S. senators to whom Hodes wrote, twenty-one were Democrats; and of the twenty-one governors to whom he wrote, fifteen were Democrats. For the party affiliation of the governors and U.S. senators, see http://www.nga.org (accessed 16 June 2010) and http://www.bioguide.congress.gov (accessed 16 June 2010).

Richard Russell to Barnet Hodes, 24 May 1938; James Davis to Hodes, 27 May 1938; Elbert Thomas to Hodes, 7 June 1938; Claude Pepper to Hodes, 3 June 1938; Harry Nice to Hodes, 28 May 1938; Barnet Hodes Papers, Box 10, Folder 14, Chicago History Museum.

John J. Pershing to Barnet Hodes, 27 April 1939; Theodore Roosevelt to Hodes, 15 January 1940; Felix Frankfurter to Hodes, 3 September 1941; Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Hodes, 3 September 1941 and 13 November 1941; Barnet Hodes Papers, Box 10, Folder 14, Chicago History Museum. Hodes sent letters to twenty-two history departments. See “Salomon Letter to Universities,” Barnet Hodes Papers, Box 10, Folder 12, Chicago History Museum. A number of letters sent to Hodes refer to the publication in which they read his request.


Barnet Hodes to I. B. Pearlman, 3 January 1940, Barnet Hodes Papers, Box 10, Folder 14, Chicago History Museum. Hodes’s response to Congressman Celler resembles the clash between “fact” and “interpretation” that Edward T. Linenthal observed during the *Enola Gay* controversy at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum during the 1990s. See Linenthal, “Anatomy of a Controversy,” in *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*, ed. Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1996), 9–62. See also Barnet Hodes to James A. James, 26 March 1940, Barnet Hodes Papers, Box 10, Folder 12, Chicago History Museum. In his book, written on behalf of the Patriotic Foundation of Chicago, Harry Barnard observed, “Reflecting the true situation that the War of Independence was not a one-man affair but included many other patriots, Washington properly does not stand alone.” Barnard, *This Great Triumvirate of Patriots,* 7; Wenger, “Sculpting an American Jewish Hero,” 137; For the patriotic symbol serving pluralistic ends in the Midwest, see Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 113–137.

For the bleak economic situation in Chicago, especially during the early 1930s, see Pacyga, *Chicago: A Biography*, 251, 253. The foreign-born and their offspring accounted for 64.3 percent of Chicago’s population in 1930. Ibid., 257; Biles, “Edward J. Kelly,” 111–125; a telegram to Louis Schwartz from Barnet Hodes, 4 January 1940, and a letter from Hodes to Harry Jacoby, 19 March 1940, indicate that Hodes had hoped to see the statue completed in 1940. He explicitly states in the telegram that a statue was being erected in Chicago because of the bicentennial of Salomon’s birth and that it would be a “permanent tribute to our first President and two of the leading figures of the American Revolution.” Barnet Hodes Papers, Box 10, Folder 12, Chicago History Museum.


In *Schoenberg’s New World: The American Years*, Sabine Feisst convincingly debunks the longstanding Eurocentric myth that the renowned and controversial composer Arnold Schoenberg was “disadvantaged, neglected, and disillusioned” during his American “exile” period of 1933–1951 (3). Schoenberg’s American years have been characterized predominantly as years of failure and neglect, both artistically and financially, endured by an undervalued genius who, in return, refused either to compromise his artistic ideals or adapt to his new environment. Instead of repeating this same assessment, Feisst demonstrates in her study that Schoenberg’s music was in fact well received in the United States—that it was supported by numerous patrons, publishers, conductors, colleagues, and students. Moreover, she shows that the composer eagerly acculturated himself to his new home country. Feisst suggests that the inherited American reception of Schoenberg, often compared to his previously acclaimed European success, deserves a thorough reappraisal within a historical, social, and cultural context (xi). On this count, few articles or book chapters on the composer’s American years can compete with the wide array of sources employed in Feisst’s book, which utilizes an extensive number of unpublished manuscripts, interviews, and periodicals, as well as the most current Schoenberg scholarship.

The first chapter opens fittingly by summarizing misconceptions, questions, and debates surrounding detailed aspects of Schoenberg’s American years—misconceptions involving his personality, health, financial problem, and political inclinations. Based on his own conflicting personal statements of his American experience, Schoenberg has been portrayed as an outsider in both Europe and America. Biographers have uncritically utilized Schoenberg’s views to support their differing agendas, either describing Schoenberg as a “suffering hero” who was mistreated in a foreign country or as “a snob” who refused to assimilate (4). Others have portrayed him as an opportunist who compromised his artistic ideals for popular appeal in the new world (44). Thus, an in-depth look into Schoenberg’s personality and a detailed account of his life, work, and relationships is essential to understand these contrasting representations. Feisst’s conscientious evaluation provides readers with a balanced picture of Schoenberg, enabling them to understand the conflicting views of the composer free from entrenched biases.

In chapter three, Feisst engagingly narrates the complex blend of Schoenberg’s three identities—German, Jewish, and American—and his socialization in America with German and German-Jewish émigrés, such as Thomas Mann, Theodor W. Adorno, and Adolph Weiss. She also looks
at his interactions with American personages, such as George Gershwin and Henry Cowell. In addition, she employs concepts taken from cultural theory, such as assimilation, acculturation, and dissimilation.

Feisst includes discussions of Schoenberg’s musical works composed in America—most notably the violin and piano concertos; *Kol Nidre*, op. 39; and *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*, op. 41—and of the ways the three identities are reflected in them. The purpose of discerning these identities and categorizing musical works according to their influence is not to solidify an essentialist position but to understand better the displaced composer and his works within the complex web of identities that attain their intricacy through the acculturation and dissimilation process. Furthermore, the issue of identity, whether ethnic, national, religious, racial, or cultural, is crucial for comprehending the musical output it influenced, particularly when, as in Schoenberg’s case, the composer believed in music’s manifestation of the self and of cultural tradition (76). In discussing musical works, Feisst does not lose her focus on the main issues of identities and refrains from the temptation of technical musical analysis, thus allowing the content to be accessible to nonmusician readers.

Many of the book’s chapters are devoted to Schoenberg’s reception history, challenging the “American misery” theory surrounding him and his music. Feisst shows in chapter two that although Schoenberg’s compositions were often rejected as “a manifestation of cultural decay” (31), his advocates faithfully promoted them by having most of his dodecaphonic works programmed in America even before his arrival in 1933 (29). Furthermore, Schoenberg’s works were remarkably successful during his American years with the help of eminent performers (chapter four) and major publishers (chapter five) in the United States. Particularly interesting is Schoenberg’s influence as a teacher in America, the focus of chapter six. Drawing on interviews with Schoenberg’s students, Feisst provides a captivating account of Schoenberg as a respected pedagogue.

*Schoenberg’s New World* is a very readable but also thoroughly and meticulously documented work. Feisst supplies a compendium of recent research and further readings in footnotes and in a bibliography for interested scholars and students. The companion website with audio recordings, video clips, and photographs, designed to accompany the book, is, aside from a few broken links and minor organizational flaws, a superb tool for readers. The historic recordings are particularly appropriate in grasping the author’s characterization of the musical works and events and for understanding Schoenberg’s private and musical personas. Overall, *Schoenberg’s New World* is a pivotal work that sets an example for future musicological research on émigré composers.

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From daily content-rich after-school classes to extracurricular activities, clubs, special events, and summer camps, Yiddish secular schools provided a unique and ground-breaking Jewish education and life experience to their many students. Ranging in affiliation from communist to Zionist, the schools had varied curricular leanings, some merely using the Yiddish language to inculcate socialist ideological positions, others including extensive coverage of Jewish traditions and holidays. Unfortunately, accounts and studies of Jewish education in North America have often neglected to appropriately assess the significance of these schools to the American Jewish experience. Fradle Pomerantz Freidenreich’s prodigious new work, *Passionate Pioneers: The Story of Yiddish Secular Education in North America, 1910–1960*, seeks to address this lack in a thorough portrayal of the schools, their sponsoring organizations, teachers, directors, students, and communities.

This book—which combines historical backdrops to the events and organizations being described; detailed case studies of exemplary institutions and individuals; personal testimonies; and exhaustive lists of schools, camps, and influential figures—provides an invaluable resource and reference for scholars interested in researching this largely unexplored topic. Relying on archival research, personal interviews, and correspondence, Freidenreich uncovered information, to varying degrees, on “160 communities, totaling close to 1,000 Yiddish secular schools, and 39 summer camps that existed in North America in the period covered by this book” (xv).

Despite the significance of Freidenreich’s original research, the work lacks, in places, a coherent logical progression and readable organizational structure. Many of the chapters, particularly the introductory ones summarizing the scope of Jewish education in North America and outlining the Jewish political movements that supported the schools, present information in a repetitive and both chronologically and geographically confusing manner. As the author delves deeper into the details of her specific subject matter, however, the prose improves; the chapters on innovations in Yiddish secular education and on the teaching profession are particularly engaging.

One of the most striking innovations of the Yiddish secular schools that Freidenreich describes is that, years ahead of their time, the schools exemplified what is now known as *confluent education*—“the integration, or merging, of the cognitive and affective domains” (133). By supplementing coursework with extracurricular clubs and summer camps, teachers combined social and recreational experiences with formal learning, providing an immersive experience and cementing a lifelong emotional connection to Yiddish culture. This model became popular in mainstream Jewish schools only in the 1970s, fifty
years after Yiddish secular schools had begun employing the approach without using the specific terminology.

Freidenreich’s own work employs a confluent paradigm in recreating the world she describes. Her text is interspersed with fascinating and rare archival images relating to Yiddish schools and camps: photographs, postcards, journal covers, posters, textbook illustrations, and more. Furthermore, the book is accompanied by a CD with audio recordings of fifteen songs that were popular in Yiddish schools and camps.

Freidenreich describes the decline of the school systems in the afterword, as well as in a chapter about the effects of twentieth century national and world events on the schools. As a result of the Holocaust and the consequent cessation of immigration from Eastern Europe, assimilation, the move of Jewish families to the suburbs, the impact of identification with the new State of Israel, and the increasingly anticommunist climate, the number of families interested in sending their children to Yiddish-speaking schools dropped in the second half of the twentieth century.

In addition, those schools that had sought to educate their students purely through using the Yiddish language, without any Jewish content, realized the long-term inviability of such plans. Freidenreich quotes Zalman Yefroikin, a director of the education department of one of the sponsoring organizations, as saying, “The view that a Jewish national life could be possible without observance of a Jewish pattern … has been found erroneous; it has come to be recognized that to be a Jew it is necessary to live a Jewish life” (194). The author stresses, however, that despite their eventual decline, the schools were largely successful in accomplishing their educational goals for the three or four generations of students who attended them.

To conclude, not only does Passionate Pioneers compile documentation on its subject matter that will be indispensible for any further studies, but it also serves as a nostalgic tribute to a vibrant world that, due to various internal and external political, economic, and social circumstances, has ceased to exist as the widespread national phenomenon it once was. The author’s unmistakable personal connection to the material is palpable throughout the text, as she memorializes the people and institutions she describes. Itself “pioneering” a subfield within American Jewish history, Freidenreich’s work opens new avenues of inquiry for future scholars to pursue.

Asya Vaisman is a visiting research scholar and lecturer in Jewish studies at Indiana University, working on The Archives of Historical and Ethnographic Yiddish Memories (AHEYM) project. Her research focuses on the Yiddish songs and singing practices of contemporary Hasidic women in Europe, Israel, and the United States.

During Reconstruction, most white Southerners felt that there was no difference between a carpetbagger and a scalawag; both were scum. The carpetbagger was a Northern opportunist who “invaded” the South after the Yankee victory, ensconcing himself in a cushy government job. The scalawag was a Southern boy who turned on his people by supporting black suffrage and equality and who reaped “unjust economic benefits” from those who would manipulate the Confederate defeat. I must admit, as an impartial student of the War of Yankee Aggression, I, too, did not see much of a difference between them. That is, until I read Benjamin Ginsberg’s book about Franklin Moses, Jr.

This slim volume is informative, well-documented, and fascinating. Its story of Moses is a journey back into the world of Reconstruction South Carolina. Franklin Moses, Sr., was a Jewish judge in antebellum Carolina and also served as such in the Confederate state government. His son, Franklin, Jr., was born of a gentle mother and not raised as a Jew, but in that oppressively race-conscious world, he was never allowed to forget that he was half-Jewish.

Young Moses served in the South Carolina Confederate state militia and actually raised the rebel flag over Ft. Sumter when it surrendered in April 1861. He was a typical white Confederate, so it would seem. It was after the war that he started down the path that led him to become the Republican governor of his state (1872–1874) and a fast and firm friend of the freedmen (former slaves who had been emancipated).

After the war, Moses became an editor for *The Sumter News*. From editorials in that paper, one can see that he actually believed that the “new order” would bring peace and prosperity to South Carolina. He quickly saw that race was not an indicator of ability or talent and that if the South were to recover, native whites would need to guide and help the freedmen. Moses actually believed this and, what’s more, he acted on it.

Unlike most white Americans in his day, Moses developed close ties with many in the freedmen community, socialized with them, and seemed to truly believe in their equality. He made friends with many of the freedmen who were known as “browns” or “mulattos.” His closest associate and best friend was Francis Cardozo, the son of a Jewish father and African-American mother. Cardozo was educated as a Christian in Europe before the war, but he returned to South Carolina and helped Moses rebuild the state.

Ex-Confederate white Southerners were returned to power in the elections right after the war, only to be removed by the Republican-controlled U.S. Congress. White Southerners basically boycotted the next few elections, so that Moses, known as a friend of the freedmen, was easily elected to state assembly with freedmen support. This new state congress rewrote its constitution in
1868, and Moses, being literate, well-spoken, and white, was made speaker of the assembly by his freedmen allies. It was easy to see that Moses would be elected governor in the 1872 elections, because the freedmen saw him as one of their few white allies and friends—which was true. He was also close with many black pastors and “brown” politicians—the black intelligentsia of his day.

Unfortunately, Moses also had a seamier side. He was a typical machine politician of the late 1800s—a time when politics was synonymous with power, money, and corruption. Suffice it to say that Moses, like most politicos of his day, worked the patronage system. He was, however, true to his base and loyal to his friends and family. His father, a former Confederate judge, became a prosperous Republican judge, and his freedmen base never lacked for his support. Moses was said to have supported women’s suffrage and even “dallied” with four mixed-race sisters. White Southerners and former Confederates hated Moses, whom they dubbed “Jewnior.”

This book does not sugar-coat the racism that existed after the Civil War. Referenda were passed denying freedmen the right to vote in Minnesota, Kansas, and Ohio. President Grant actually wanted to repeal the Fifteenth Amendment, saying, “It has done the Negro no good; and had been a hindrance to the South, and by no means a political advantage to the North.”

This story of Moses, a long-forgotten scalawag who was unafraid of going against the grain of white Southern society, is well worth reading.

Rabbi Eric B. Wisnia was ordained at HUC-JIR (Cincinnati) in 1974. After serving three years as assistant rabbi in a Toledo, Ohio, congregation, he became rabbi of Congregation Beth Chaim in Princeton Junction, New Jersey, where he has served for thirty-five years.


Yavneh: The National Jewish Religious Students Association was founded in 1960 by a group of eighty American students at thirteen colleges and universities to serve the practical, intellectual, and social needs of modern Orthodox students who were increasingly finding their way onto American college campuses and who were not finding their needs met by the Hillel foundations or other existing institutions. At its height there were forty-five chapters across the United States and Canada and thousands of participants in its coeducational weekly Bible and Talmud lessons, lectures, debates, summer institutes, conventions, publications programs, and social events, all dedicated to the principle that one “could be fully Orthodox, intellectually inquisitive and rigorous, steeped in modern culture, and have fun at the same time.”
Through its educational programs, publications in English, year-in-Israel experiments, and full accessibility of leadership positions to young women, Yavneh was the vanguard for elements that later became common in a revitalized Orthodox world, from the explosion in English-language publishing to the now-ubiquitous year in Israel after graduation from day school. Eventually, many of these elements rendered Yavneh moot. The organization flourished and then gradually faded until its demise in 1980–1981, though its alumni fill the ranks of Jewish studies professors and the elite of Modern Orthodox Jewish leaders. Its story conveyed here by the late Benny Kraut tells in microcosm the story of American Jewish Orthodoxy through a critical period of dizzying renaissance on the one hand and increasingly bitter polarization and rightward shifting on the other. The draft of the manuscript was completed only a short time before the author, himself a member and national officer in Yavneh, passed away from a massive heart attack at the age of 61. Jonathan Sarna in the foreword writes movingly of the impact Benny Kraut had on many of his colleagues, friends, and students.

As the author recounts it, American Orthodox Judaism, which most observers predicted was dying in the 1950s, actually came of age in the 1960s. The renaissance went along two trajectories. One included the communities of what is labeled today the “Orthodox religious right” or by some as “haredi Judaism”—fervently Orthodox adherents of either the Hasidic movements or the Lithuanian-oriented yeshiva that are represented by the Agudath Israel of America. There was dynamic rabbinic leadership, increased fertility, greater financial support from increasingly prosperous laity, and a reduction in the stigma of the association with greenhorn immigrants. This Orthodox group disseminated an insular religious world view that included a rejection of non-Jewish culture as much as was possible and complete faith in the primacy of Torah and its sages in all affairs.

At the same time, a comparatively less insular form of what became Modern Orthodox Judaism, represented by the Rabbinical Council of America and epitomized by the revered Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, was also flowering. These Modern Orthodox Jews were moving to the suburbs, contradicting the assumption that upward mobility inevitably undermined religious traditionalism. Their children—graduates of an increasing number of Orthodox day schools—were starting to flock to colleges, including Ivy League institutions that in the past had limited their admission of Jewish students.

The far-right spectrum of fervent Orthodoxy became ascendant after the 1960s and shifted the entire Orthodox world to the right, at times affecting the morale and self-confidence of less insular Jews. By the 1970s some within the Modern Orthodox camp began to refer to themselves as “centrist” Orthodox Jews in an effort to situate themselves in the moderate middle and to mute their identification with “modernity,” a word that had developed pejorative
connotations on the right. Kraut, who was himself a national officer in Yavneh, recalls “the more open Orthodoxy of yesteryear,” when young men and women could still mingle freely together and all on the spectrum of Orthodoxy were still talking to one another and reading one another’s writing, as they did at Yavneh forums in the early 1960s. Such conversations across ideological and religious lines, he writes, would be “unthinkable” today.

The Greening of American Orthodox Judaism also documents the great changes that have occurred on the American college campus and its much greater acceptance of Orthodox Jews both by the general public and non-Orthodox Jews, some of whom in the early 1960s were actively hostile to Yavneh requests. Yavneh founders had practical day-to-day issues to deal with, such as biased professors (often Jewish themselves) who automatically gave Orthodox students a C, regardless of how well they had done in the course; the unavailability of kosher food; mandatory residence and board plans that made them pay for food they could not eat; and exams given on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays. One Barnard president, in offering a rationale for refusing to accommodate kosher students, wrote “The Rabbi [a campus chaplain] told me you are exempt from keeping kosher in a college dormitory, because being in a dormitory is like being in the Army.”

Even some Hillel rabbis of that era, who came overwhelmingly from Reform, Conservative, or Reconstructionist backgrounds, resented the “self-righteousness,” “sectarianism,” “fanaticism,” and “divisiveness” of Yavneh students and considered the group to be a “nuisance.” At one school a rumor circulated, according to one Hillel rabbi, that Conservative Jewish parents would no longer encourage their children to participate in Hillel because they were apprised that “the Orthodox students are taking over.” At the University of Chicago, the Hillel rabbis rebuffed Yavneh demands to establish a kosher dining room in the Hillel basement for the increasing number of students requesting it (more than forty in 1965) because, in their opinion, honoring this request might turn Hillel into an “Orthodox hangout” and drive away the non-Orthodox students (101). One of them, in a memo giving seven reasons why he would not push for kosher dining at the university, included that “Study is more important than eating” and that allowing kosher food would “reduce Judaism to a gastronomic activity.” He also wrote that “Hillel could not serve a segment of Jewish students in such a way as to alienate other segments of Jewish students” and that “Kashrut is one of the most easily contaminated mitzvoth that we have” (118). Fortunately for kosher students, Hillel policy on these matters was to change markedly when it was reorganized and revitalized under the leadership of Richard Joel (1988–2003).

The majority of Jews in the early 1960s, according to Kraut, believed that when Jews had finally gained access in significant numbers to nondenominational, nonsectarian institutions of higher education, it was their job was to
be “sincerely grateful and melt into the cultural mainstream, not make any special Jewish ethnic and religious requests.” That Yavneh students refused to do so and worked to create an organization that would meet their religious, cultural, and educational needs makes their story a remarkable chapter within American Jewish history. Furthermore, their actions helped to prepare the ground for the accommodation of student differences that is common on the college campuses of today.

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In 1910 the magazine American Hebrew asked, “Why are Jews so successful in the theatre and in the drama?” The author pointed to the “remarkable activity of Jews in the theatrical profession as managers, authors, and players.” This is the topic that award-winning producer Stewart F. Lane explores in his survey of Jewish theater artists, Jews on Broadway. Lane writes in a breezy, chatty style, presenting a work clearly intended as an introductory text for fans of Broadway theater and those with an interest in twentieth-century Jewish American culture.

The work is broken into eight short chapters, which span the development of Jewish theater in America from the Yiddish theater phenomenon at the end of the nineteenth/beginning of the twentieth century to the newest generation of Broadway stars. While some of the work is presented in a more traditional narrative format, other sections read more like extended encyclopedia entries (for example, the sections on Fanny Brice, Irving Berlin, George and Ira Gershwin, Lillian Hellman, Leonard Bernstein, Arthur Miller, Wendy Wasserstein, Alan Menken, Mel Brooks, Idina Menzel, and many other individual luminaries). Scholars of American musical theater, Broadway, and Jewish theater will likely already be familiar with many of the figures discussed throughout the text. Few of these entries contain citations for the information they present.

In his exploration of what made certain performers successful or unsuccessful, Lane turns to Jewish stars such as Tovah Feldshuh for an assessment of how Jews have navigated the complexities of American theater and culture. Feldshuh reveals that her visibly “Jewish” name has been both an asset and a hindrance in her career—helping her secure roles when a Jewish character was essential (as in Kissing Jessica Stein or Golda’s Balcony) and proving an obstacle when producers sought a less “ethnic” performer (144). In an interview with Lane, Feldshuh noted that part of the key to Jewish performers’ success lay in the fact that, “We were always great storytellers, and we could be self-deprecating before others could deprecate us” (145).
Throughout his discussion of Jews’ roles in American theater since the 1980s, Lane draws on his own rich experience as a Broadway producer, and his insights into shows such as La Cage Aux Folles (the 1983 production) and The Will Rogers Follies are some of the book’s highlights. As Lane notes of his blossoming career in the 1980s and 1990s, “I was lucky to be working and living in New York City at a time when I was not a victim of the prejudice or persecution that befell so many Jewish people who had come before me” (175). Lane concludes his study with a meditation on the high percentage of Jewish artists who have contributed to the development of American theater (particularly Broadway) over the past century. He invokes the song “You Won’t Succeed on Broadway” from the 2005 production of Spamalot, with its prophetic lines, “You haven’t got a clue/If you don’t have a Jew.… You just won’t succeed on Broadway if you don’t have any Jews” (192).

While Lane’s text may engage readers less familiar with the history of Broadway, American theater, and Jewish American culture, the book is unfortunately peppered with factual, grammatical, and typographical errors, from the incorrect name of the play Abraham Lincoln was watching when he was assassinated to inconsistent spellings of various artists’ names such as Fanny Brice or companies such as the Group Theatre.

Numerous biographies and other surveys of Broadway and musical theater are listed in the “Further Reading” section, but since these books do not appear in the bibliography or the chapter notes, it is difficult to tell whether they were consulted in compiling the information presented here. Lane seems to rely heavily on popular Internet sources such as the Internet Movie Database (IMDB) and “Corine’s Corner.” Readers seeking a more in-depth exploration of the intersections between Jewish American culture and the development of the American theater may wish to turn to works by Henry Bial (Acting Jewish), Barbara Grossman (Funny Woman), Harley Erdman (Staging the Jew), Julius Novick (Beyond the Golden Door), and David Savran (Highbrow/Lowdown). Researchers on Jewish American theater may also wish to explore the extraordinary archival resources available at The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, the Billy Rose Theatre Collection, the Center for Jewish History, and the Harvard Theatre Collection.

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Notes


“O city metropole, isle riverain…”

*A.M. Klein, “Montreal,” in* The Rocking Chair, and Other Poems (*Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1948*)

Although it has long since been surpassed by Toronto as the “capital” of Canadian Jewry, Montreal retains a distinctive political, institutional, demographic, cultural, linguistic, and even gustatory profile among North American Jewish communities. The city itself casts an aura by virtue of its dramatic setting in the shadow of Mount Royal. The illuminated cross atop the mountain serves as a reminder that the boundaries between religion and state are more fluid in Canada—and especially Quebec—than they are in the neighboring republic.

The cross had a peculiar presence in poems by Yiddish writers in Montreal, we read in *Jewish Roots, Canadian Soil* (87). A glance at the “Map of Jewish Montreal 1905–1945” (xxii) helps to explain why: the city’s Jews lived in neighborhoods adjoining Mount Royal Park. The principal business and commercial artery of the old Jewish neighborhood was The Main (St. Lawrence Boulevard/Boulevard St-Laurent), the official dividing line between east and west in the city’s grid. In addition, The Main once demarcated the French- and English-speaking halves of the linguistically divided metropolis; Jews thus inhabited both a central and a liminal space within Montreal.

The institutional framework of Yiddish culture in Montreal is the principal focus of Rebecca Margolis’s monograph.1 Large-scale immigration of eastern European Jews to Montreal started later, experienced somewhat briefer interruptions, and was of longer duration than was the case in the United States. Thus, Montreal’s Yiddish-speaking milieu maintained its vitality until quite recently. In an extensive introduction, Margolis provides historical background on the development of secular Yiddish culture, Jewish immigration to Canada, and the position of Yiddish Montreal on the world scene. The introduction is followed by chapters on the Yiddish press (focusing on the *Keneder adler* newspaper [1907–1988] and on several small literary magazines), Yiddish literary activity in Montreal (and the Jewish Public Library’s role in nurturing it), the secular Yiddish schools in Montreal, and the Montreal Yiddish theater. The final chapter discusses Yiddish Montreal after 1945—when an influx of thousands
of Holocaust survivors reinvigorated the institutions that are introduced in the previous chapters.

The network of Yiddish-centered institutions described here could not have been developed without the initiative of enterprising and committed individuals such as Hirsch Wolofsky, editor of the *Keneder adler*; Reuben Brainin and Yehudah Kaufman (Even-Shmuel), cofounders of the Jewish Public Library; the Yiddish and Hebrew educator Shloime Wiseman; and the Yiddish modernist poet and cultural impresario Melech Ravitch, who settled in Montreal in 1940. David Roskies, a scholar of Yiddish literature and postwar native of Montreal, has referred to the milieu that these individuals created as a “utopian venture” (31).

“Why Montreal and not elsewhere?” the author asks (xv). Any study on Yiddish culture in North American Jewish community is compelled to confront the dominant example of New York City. Noting that Montreal was a “minor centre of Yiddish culture before the Second World War,” Margolis refers to the “considerable and ongoing influence” of the New York Yiddish press and theater on popular Yiddish culture in Montreal (34). Yiddish “Montreal aligned itself with, and was influenced by, major centres such as New York City, Moscow, Warsaw, and Vilna,” she writes (34). Still, she contends, Yiddish Montreal was more than just “a smaller version of Yiddish New York, separated by a generation gap” (35).

The longevity of Yiddish Montreal helps to distinguish it from its U.S. counterparts. Another difference is that labor Zionists, rather than socialists, founded and ran its major institutions (36). On New York’s Lower East Side, the dominant Yiddish cultural figure was Abraham Cahan, the dictatorial editor of the social democratic, non-Zionist *Forverts* newspaper. By contrast, his Montreal counterpart was Wolofsky—businessman, labor Zionist, and publisher of the *Keneder adler*. (Wiseman and Yaacov Zipper, the leading Yiddish educators, were also labor Zionists.)

In addition, Margolis views the cohesiveness of Yiddish Montreal as a byproduct of the general political environment: “Yiddish culture was sheltered from the lure of integration by its exclusion from Quebec’s two charter groups, and it was encouraged to evolve its own infrastructure…. Montreal’s activists, organizers, and writers were simultaneously players in a transnational Yiddish cultural movement and creators of a uniquely Canadian framework designed to foster it” (38). Toward the end of her study, Margolis elaborates upon this analysis by suggesting that “Montreal’s well-developed and institutionally complete Yiddish cultural network offers an instructive example of the cultural maintenance of a minority group on Canadian soil before the advent of Canada’s official policy of multiculturalism in 1971” (190).

Because Margolis concentrates on a particular subculture within the Jewish community, she devotes limited space to other aspects of Jewish culture and institutions in Montreal. Most Jewish immigrants living in Montreal from
1905 to 1945 sent their children to English-speaking Protestant schools; supplementary education was provided not only—probably not even mainly—by the Yiddish schools, but also through the more traditionally minded (and Hebraist) Talmud Torah. Even though prospects for genuine assimilation were limited, the trajectory of the second and third generations (as outlined in the concluding chapter) is nevertheless a familiar one: mastery of the English language, professionalization, upward economic mobility, suburbanization, and geographic mobility across Canada and the United States.

The hothouse environment of Jewish Montreal during and after the period under discussion yielded a remarkable flowering not only of Yiddish culture but also of English-language literary culture and the visual arts. On page 104 of *Jewish Roots, Canadian Soil*, there is a group photograph taken at the Jewish Public Library in 1942, on the occasion of the visit of the Yiddish novelist Sholem Asch. Behind Asch (though not identified in the accompanying caption) stands Abraham Moses Klein, lawyer, editor, publicist, and one of the most influential English-language poets in Canada. Klein’s attendance at that event symbolizes an unheralded aspect of the Yiddish achievement of Montreal: the ability of its seemingly inwardly directed institutions to serve as a bridge to a wider world. Moreover—and exceptionally so (as Klein’s presence in the group photo suggests)—that particular bridge was even, at times, a two-way street.

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**Notes**

1Interestingly, much recent academic scholarship on Yiddish Montreal has been in French, by Québécois scholars such as Pierre Anctil, Jean-Marc Larrue, and Esther Trepanier.

2Klein, born in 1909 in Ratno, Volhynia (Ukraine), was a small child when he and his family immigrated to Montreal. Though he received his formal Jewish education at the Talmud Torah—and not in Montreal’s Yiddish schools—he maintained close ties with the city’s Yiddish literati. See the article by Rebecca Margolis, “Ken men tantsn af isvey khasenes? A.M. Klein and Yiddish,” in *Failure’s Opposite: Listening to A.M. Klein*, ed. Norman Ravvin and Sherry Simon (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2011), 79–97.
A new, up-to-date guide to Philadelphia holds promise for many visitors to this historic city. Linda Nesvisky’s recently published guide is actually two books. The first section is a wide-ranging selection of “personalities, places, and resources” of Jewish interest in Philadelphia. The second section is based on walking tours that the author leads focused on the city’s historic district. The book concludes with a selected list of synagogues as well as kosher and nonkosher restaurants.

The first section includes the city’s Holocaust memorial (dedicated in 1966), as well as a few synagogues of note—among them, Beth Sholom (designed by Frank Lloyd Wright), Rodeph Shalom, and Kneseth Israel. The latter two also house Judaica museums. Nesvisky also incorporates a number of libraries and archives of interest, including those with genealogical resources, such as the Rosenbach Museum, the Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center at Temple University (with illustrations of sample documents), the Free Library, and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (which includes the collections of the former Balch Institute). There is much useful information here for the casual visitor or potential researcher. The second section, the walking tour of “Jewish history in colonial Philadelphia,” seems aimed at the visitor to Independence Hall and other historical sites (13). The tour goes significantly beyond the colonial period. The conversational tone is easy to read but sometimes exceeds what historical evidence will support. However, she calls attention to many details that a visitor might miss.

As a practical contemporary guide for tourists to Philadelphia, Nesvisky’s segment on sites, museums, and libraries around the city is most successful. Her section based on the walking tour includes useful information, but numerous errors and largely neglects sites near Independence Hall settled by East European Jews. This section would benefit from more careful fact-checking and by including additional nearby sites of note.

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In *Twentieth Century Jews*, Monty Penkower has published a series of essays centered around a central theme: Jews in the first half of the twentieth century carved out their Jewish identities and understood what it means to be Jewish in
ways that were very different from each other. By exploring both biographical studies of individuals and how groups of Jews responded to particular historical events, Penkower shows how these different perspectives of Jewishness often led to tensions that erupted among Jews.

While most of the essays focus on Jews in America and in British Mandatory Palestine, the first essay discusses how Jews responded to the Kishinev Pogrom in 1903. The Kishinev Pogrom is presented as a defining moment of the twentieth century because of the varied responses Jews had to it. Not only did it spark a massive emigration of Jews from Russia and spur American Jews to act on behalf of their Russian brethren, but it also had a profound affect on Zionists, many of whom became more militant.

When Penkower turns to America, he offers studies of three very different individuals. A biographical study of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Selmanovitz portrays him as representative of the large number of Orthodox Jews who immigrated to America from eastern Europe during the early twentieth century. After living in Manhattan, Selmanovitz eventually moved his family to Williamsburg, where he emerged as the leading Orthodox rabbi in the area. But Penkower seems most interested in the rabbi’s children, some of whom followed a traditional Orthodox lifestyle while others assimilated as they embraced American culture. The story of the assimilated American Jew is examined further in studies of Justice Felix Frankfurter and Arthur Hays Sulzberger. Penkower argues that Frankfurter struggled to balance his American and Jewish identities. In public, Frankfurter sought to present himself as an American. Penkower suggests, though, that “his ambivalence about” his Jewish identity “crept into” some of his Supreme Court opinions (106). Sulzberger, publisher of the New York Times from 1935–1961, also had an ambivalent sense of his Jewish identity, according to Penkower. In addition to these biographical studies, Penkower also examines the origins of the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism, especially its founder, Morris Lazaron. Penkower argues that members of this organization were anxious about the effects Zionism would have on their efforts to assimilate into American culture.

In discussing the Jewish experience in British Mandatory Palestine, Penkower looks for meaning in the difficult and sometimes tragic events involving particular famous individuals. Why did Hayim Bialik, the most well-known Hebrew poet of his day, become so bitter during his years in Palestine? What we discover is that as he saw a new generation of Zionists—especially Revisionists—emerge in the 1920s and 1930s, he became increasingly worried that Zionism had become devoid of Judaism. This essay illuminates the diversity within the Zionist movement. Perhaps more than any other essay in his book, the examination of the murder of Haim Arlosoroff reveals the bitter divisions among Zionists. Penkower not only highlights the intense conflict between Labor and Revisionist Zionists during the 1930s but also how the controversies
surrounding the murder of Arlosoroff affected the ongoing battles between Labor and Likud into the 1990s. The conflict between Labor and Revisionists is further illustrated in an essay on Shlomo Ben-Yosef, a young Revisionist Zionist executed by the British for being part of a failed attack on an Arab bus in 1938. Penkower demonstrates in meticulous detail not only why Labor Zionists and Revisionist Zionists responded so differently, but how the Herut party and later the Likud party invoked the execution of Ben-Yosef for their own political purposes. The conflicts that emerged among Zionists are also examined in Penkower’s study of two Orthodox Zionist organizations during the 1920s and 1930s, the Mizrachi religious Zionist organization and Agudas Israel.

Penkower’s research is thorough. His overall argument, that American Jews have struggled historically to balance their American and Jewish identities, and that the opposing understandings of Zionism among Zionists have led Jews in Israel to intensely bitter conflicts, is convincing partly because his evidence in support is so exhaustive.

In many of the essays, however, the writing is too detailed. In his essay on Rabbi Selmanovitz, for example, Penkower spends five pages summarizing the life stories of each of Selmanovitz’s eight children, leaving the reader wondering why we need to know all of these details. Penkower’s essays are also focused on men exclusively, creating the impression that the construction of Jewish identity in the twentieth century, and the conflicts among Jews that they ignited, revolved solely around men. Women played extremely significant roles in the history of Jews in the twentieth century, and that they are absent in this book is a glaring omission.

That said, Twentieth Century Jews, in exploring the variety of Jewish identities that emerged during the last century, provides an interesting lens through which we can try to understand the Jewish experience in the twenty-first century.

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Marc Lee Raphael’s title undersells his book. The Synagogue in America: A Short History is, as one would expect, a succinct summary of historical trends in Jewish worship, starting with the earliest Jewish communities in the United States. But Raphael offers more than that. His book also shows, through the prism of the shul, a broader sketch of Jewish life in America. This book starts with how Jews have prayed, but it is also about how they have worked, played, eaten, related to their Christian neighbors, and related to each other.
Raphael’s conclusions are based on an impressive feat of historical archaeology. The author has sifted through the records of dozens of synagogues from around the country, many of them uncatalogued. The result is a book that provides both keen details and a broad overview of American Jewish life.

The book is divided by time periods into six chapters, most of them subdivided by topic or by branch of Judaism. Each could be read as a standalone essay, but there are themes that recur, and it is this combination that makes the book such a rich contribution to the field.

One key theme is the general decline of the synagogue as the central vehicle of American Jewish life. In colonial times, Raphael notes, “the synagogue was … the Jewish community” (2). In the twenty-first century, so many Jews attend no service regularly and identify with no movement that it is debatable whether the Jewish community is still a community at all. In between, American synagogues went through cycles of reform and reaction to cope with immigration, assimilation, and America’s ever-changing culture.

Indeed, some form of the reform-versus-tradition debate in American synagogues is about as old as the United States itself. Raphael traces dissatisfaction with the status quo as far back as the 1790s, when German Jewish immigrants began breaking from the Sephardic rites that had prevailed in the eighteenth century. While the German shuls began with traditions brought from Europe, changes were not long in coming. In fact, the process of reform was under way even before Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise set foot in America. Some of the innovations that would become hallmarks of Reform Judaism, including instrumental music, mixed seating, and a shortened liturgy, were widespread even before the founding of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1873. When the Reform movement organized itself, it ratified a spirit of experimentation that had been percolating in individual congregations for decades.

The spirit of reform existed in Europe as well, but some of the concerns of American congregations reflect the influence of American Christianity. For most congregational leaders in the nineteenth century, Raphael writes, “a decorous, traditional service was as American as the 4th of July” (35). The evidence here suggests, however, that socializing in services is as Jewish as matzo ball soup. In fact, Raphael argues, concerns about decorum led many worshipers away from the more chaotic Orthodox service to what would become the Conservative movement. Orthodox Judaism, on the other hand, once it began to define itself, did so partly by its conspicuous indifference to American norms. Even the early “modern” Orthodox rabbis, with extensive secular as well as Jewish education, “rarely made any comments on the events unfolding on the American scene in the 1920s or early 1930s” (90). Eventually, however, the high-church influence seeped into even Orthodox expectations. Orthodox rabbis in the pre-World-War-II years sounded like Reform rabbis of the nineteenth century and Conservative rabbis of the 1920s in their calls for a reverent, decorous worship
service. Even today, across the denominational spectrum, the battle against inattention goes on.

The fact that even Orthodox Judaism adapted to America does not mean, of course, that any of the periodic calls for American Jewish unity would be heeded. The postwar years would see Orthodox Jews become ever-more observant and insistent in their separateness, even as many Reform congregations restored some pre-Reform traditions. One of the lessons of Raphael’s book, however, is that no matter their theology, American synagogues have faced some common challenges. The responses to those challenges helped fracture American Judaism into the synagogue movements we know today.

Though written skillfully, Raphael’s book is meant to be brief, not exhaustive, and as such it is sometimes light on the context of the changes it describes. Those knowledgeable about American social history will recognize topics and trends that Raphael might only allude to or lightly touch on. But even though readers who bring more to the book likely will get more out of it, nearly anyone with an interest in American Jewish history can find something illuminating in this engaging work.

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In 1954, the Reverend Norman Vincent Peale, author of *The Power of Positive Thinking* (1952), walked into a bookstore to check on his best-selling book. Alfred Kinsey’s account on female sexuality was on the shelves and the minister wanted to know how his sales compared with Kinsey’s. The clerk told Peale that his book was way ahead, adding, “Religion is much more popular than sex this year.”

Peale wasn’t the only one benefiting from religion’s then-newfound popularity. The postwar religious revival in America and a Cold War embrace of the country’s “Judeo-Christian” tradition proved salubrious for Catholics and Jews, too, as Kevin Schultz demonstrates in his *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its Protestant Promise*. For scholars of twentieth-century American Jewish history, this book is a must-read.

Unlike their fascist and communist enemies, Americans took pride in their God-centered moral authority that was tolerant enough to include non-Protestants. A new tri-faith image of America replaced the old ideal of America as a Protestant country and gave Jews and Catholics the security to challenge American ideas about which groups deserved power and social and
cultural recognition. Given Jews’ tiny numbers, the idea that America was a tri-faith nation was definitely a sociological myth, but, as Schultz points out, it was a myth that produced “very substantive results, as “the pluralism subtly acknowledged in the tri-faith concept helped soften the ground for the civil rights movement of the 1960s.”

The first part of Schultz’s book traces the history of the concept of a tri-faith nation, which had its origin in the 1910s and 1920s, as a response to the revitalization of the KKK. Similar to the capital-labor divide of the 1930s and the racial divide of the 1960s “sits another ideological division that has been mostly forgotten, that of Tri-Faith America.”

In part two, Schultz examines the ways the tri-faith image popularized certain ideals from the mid-1940s to the early 1960s. Catholics and Jews used their new acceptance in society to challenge ideas about Protestant domination and to erect a high wall of separation between religion and state. Communalism, too, gained traction during these years—not in the 1960s, as commonly assumed—making Schultz’s book especially important for proving that anticonformist and anticonsensus ideas circulated during the years following World War II and that “it was not race, class, or gender that served as the central provocateur, but religion.”

America’s becoming a “tri-faith nation” was not without its struggles, Schultz ably shows. The country’s status as a Protestant nation had been forged on the assumption that Catholicism and Judaism were threatening to an America in the throes of the Cold War. Differing opinions about religion in the public schools revealed the country’s strong divisions along religious lines. In this ideological crossfire, prejudices were revealed, and tensions between Catholics and Jews ran high. Jews were known as godless and Catholics seemed anti-democratic, with their claim to possessing the sole route to salvation and their support of school prayer and public funding for parochial schools. Still, Jews and Catholics forged unity around the desire to banish established Protestantism, and if the resulting increase in secularity in American culture was not exactly what anyone had bargained for, it did help further freedom of religious expression in the long run.

The author’s focus on the mid-century fight for separation of religion and state demonstrate the importance of the Supreme Court in this struggle. Schultz’s choice of case studies, including the U.S. Census and college fraternities, are particularly apt for revealing Catholic and Jewish anxieties around religious differences and identity. These anxieties included race, a facet that Schultz explores in a chapter called “From Creed to Color.” Here, he shows the limits of the tolerance promoted at midcentury.

Schultz’s concluding chapter, “The Return of Protestant America?” is interesting because it suggests the temporary nature of tri-faith America. Signs of a backlash against tri-faith America were apparent even before the 1980s and
the rise of the religious right, Schultz shows, as Protestants began efforts to take back “their country” in the 1960s. In the 1970s, America’s religious divisions were increasingly those between liberals and conservatives, rather than among Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. Tri-faith America has had its heyday, Schultz’s book argues, but its effects have proved enduring.

Rachel Gordan received her doctorate from Harvard in American religious history and is now a postdoctoral fellow in the religious studies department at Northwestern University. She is working on a book on post-World-War-II American Judaism.


Historian Harold Troper has produced a highly readable, engaging, and well-researched study of Canadian Jewish communal life in the 1960s. Troper has assembled a vast array of sources: close to ninety interviews with key Canadian Jewish leaders and activists from the 1960s; a wealth of archival material from major Jewish organizations; reviews of the Jewish and non-Jewish press for the decade; and much of the published historical scholarship on Canadian Jewish life in that period.

Troper convincingly argues that the 1960s marked a turning point for Canadian Jews. During that time, Canadian Jews definitively emerged from the shadow of the Holocaust and a self-image as a marginal immigrant community. They sought to assert full and equal status as Canadian citizens while at the same time retaining their Jewish culture and social and political commitments. The Jewish community was committed to full participation in the new multicultural Canadian reality at all levels, yet at the same time displayed a new energy when defending its own particular interests. In this sense, Canadian Jews were an early poster child for Canadian multiculturalism and, indeed, continue to be.

Troper builds his rationale through a judicious use of key case studies of public events and controversies during the 1960s that helped define the decade. In a sense, the volume is a history of the Jewish polity in action and emphasizes the role of organized community leaders as they relate to each other, to both the federal and provincial governments, and to rank-and-file Canadian Jews. This volume is thus not social history and does not trace changes in factors such as assimilation, intermarriage, synagogue attendance, and the like. Rather, it is a fascinating chronicle of the responses to key public issues that shaped the collective Jewish agenda. Many of these responses in the 1960s flowed through the Canadian Jewish Congress. Key players were Sam Bronfman, the wealthy Montrealer who controlled the CJC from its offices in Montreal, and Saul Hayes, who served as national director and was in many ways Canadian
Jewry’s leading public servant. Of course, at the same time organizations such as B’nai Brith, and the Federations in Montreal and Toronto were becoming increasingly active and vocal.

One case Troper examines was the rise of French nationalism and then separatism/sovereignty in Quebec and the gradual shift in communal power and population from Montreal to Toronto, which began in the 1960s. The Jewish community in Quebec was essentially frightened by and opposed to the rise of Quebec nationalism and any threat of independence from Canada. This opposition stemmed largely from a history of old-style Catholic antisemitism in Quebec that was perhaps unique on the continent. In addition, the large majority of Quebec Jews were English speakers in a province where French was increasingly prioritized in every sphere. Meanwhile, the federal government was crafting its response to the rise of French nationalism, in the form of an official bilingual and multicultural policy. Troper illustrates how the Jewish community was involved in all of these developments.

A second case was the defense of Israel before, during, and after the Six Day War. Troper illustrates how Israel emerged as a defining issue on the Jewish agenda and reshaped patterns of Jewish fundraising and political lobbying. The Canada Israel Committee was created by Congress, B’nai Brith, and the Canadian Zionist Federation, to act as a more effective Ottawa-based voice in defense of Israel. Troper traces the multidimensional ways in which the defense of Israel took shape: ramping up fundraising operations, mobilizing influential Jews and Jewish voters, lobbying public servants and politicians, and engaging with the new anti-Israel forces on Canadian campuses.

A third issue was the defense of Jews at home and abroad in the face of antisemitism. Troper, who includes interviews with several key figures, traces the fight in Canada against neo-Nazi antisemitism, from mobilizing against a neo-Nazi rally in a Toronto park to protesting the coverage of neo-Nazis by the CBC. This was an issue in which organizations of Holocaust survivors in particular played a role, prodding the Jewish establishment to more actively oppose antisemitism. Troper also traces the fight by Canadian Jews, mainly in Toronto, to gain access finally to the major elite private clubs. Another case was the conflict between the Jewish community, and notably Toronto Rabbi Stuart Rosenberg, with the United Church Observer and its influential editor, Rev. A.C. Forrest. The reverend was a harsh critic of Israel and Zionism during the period of the Six Day War and after, and to many Jews the Observer’s caustic comments seemed to cross over into antisemitism.

Of course, another major political issue of the period was the rise of the Soviet Jewry movement. In this case, as in the communal response to antisemitism and the need to defend Israel on campuses, it fell at times to younger Canadian Jews to galvanize a more staid Jewish communal establishment.
Indeed, Troper is well aware of the role of Jewish student activism in that decade, as part of the general 1960s zeitgeist of student movements.

Troper does not seek to draw grand conclusions in the superb chronicle of what was indeed a defining decade for Canadian (and American, it might be added) Jewry. He simply sets out the evidence that supports his argument about the decade’s centrality. Moreover, he links this change in Canadian Jewish life with other contextual facts, such as the close links of Canadian Jewry with the federal Liberal party, in power for most of that decade, and with the emergence of the charismatic Pierre Trudeau as Prime Minister in 1968, representing the flagship Montreal Jewish riding of Mount Royal. What emerges from his account is the story of the transformation of Canadian Jewry from a still insecure minority group to a group that was at home in Canada, both as a full participant in Canadian life and as a staunch defender of Jewish interests at home and abroad.

Morton Weinfeld is professor of sociology at McGill University where he holds the chair in Canadian ethnic studies. He has written widely on Canadian Jewish issues and is the author of Like Everyone Else but Different: The Paradoxical Success of Canadian Jews.

Bauman offers short encyclopedia entries, including illustrations, on the history of Jewish life in the United States from colonial times to the present. Organized chronologically, the book offers information on individual personalities and overarching themes found in areas such as business, culture, immigration, government, organizations, religion, and sports.


This four-volume reference work gives one- to two-page coverage to hundreds of Jewish personalities from the 1840s to the present, ranging from actors and politicians to rabbis, authors, and social workers. Each entry offers a short biography of the person’s early life, as well as his or her life’s work and lasting significance in the greater Jewish and secular worlds.


Jack Porter, Gerald Glazer, and Sanford Aronin each recount their childhood and teenage memories of growing up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in the 1950s and early 1960s. Their stories explore the intersection between Jewish and American identity and offer commentary on how Jewish life has changed from Eisenhower’s time to today.


Preisler has collected photographs of people and places spanning Jewish life in West Virginia throughout most of the twentieth century. Each chapter covers a different geographical area in the state, with many of the pages containing two to three photos ranging from the early 1900s to the 1990s. Lengthy captions explain each photo and add fuller historical context.


Elmer Berger served as the executive director of the American Council for Judaism, an anti-Zionist organization, from World War II until after the 1967 Six-Day War. Ross traces Berger’s professional life during this period and offers facts and analysis of his role in the circle of twentieth-century liberal Jewish anti-Zionism.
The Marcus Center is pleased to announce the creation of a new endowed fellowship: The American Council for Judaism Fellowship. The Council is a national organization that promotes the spiritual, intellectual and societal obligations of the Jewish religion, as well as the civic duties and responsibilities that are incumbent on all citizens of the United States.

The American Council for Judaism Fellowship supports scholarly historical research in a wide variety of areas that relate to the organization’s core interests: historical perspectives on the American Council for Judaism; the history of American Reform Judaism; the interrelationships and integration of Jewish ideals and a democratic society; the historical development of the concept of Americans of the Jewish faith and its coequal relationship with all faiths in America; and the historical study of Classical Reform Judaism. Above all, the ACJ Fellowship supports the work of scholars who are pursuing critical and scientific research that promises to deepen our understanding of the history and development of American Judaism and the American Jewish experience.

The Fellowship Program of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives was established in 1977 by our institution’s founder, the late Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus. Since its inception, more than 350 scholars from over 20 countries have been named Marcus Center Fellows.

Applicants for the Marcus Center Fellowship program must be conducting serious research in some area relating to the history of North American Jewry. Fellows receive a generous stipend to conduct research and study at the American Jewish Archives for one month.

Applications are available online at www.americanjewisharchives.org

For more information, contact Mr. Kevin Proffitt at kproffitt@huc.edu
Here is a selected listing of new accessions added to the collection of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives in 2011.

**Adler, Samuel**
Recording of an interview with the composer concerning his work and career.

*Received from the Union for Reform Judaism, New York, NY*

**Alfred and Adele Davis Academy (Atlanta, GA)**
“The Davis Academy History and Background,” containing history, meeting minutes, memos, clippings of the Reform Jewish Day school in Atlanta, GA.

*Received from Harriet J. Zoller, Atlanta, GA*

**Armonk Independent Fire Company (Armonk, NY)**
Banner bearing a Star of David and menorah, carried by Jewish firefighters of the Armonk Independent Fire Company during parades and other public events.

*Received from Douglas E. Krantz, Armonk, NY*

**Benamy, Avivah**
*My Two Worlds,* a memoir of her life, focusing on her identity as a Jew and an American.

*Received from Arnona Rudavsky, Cincinnati, OH*

**Bender, Ann**
Family and personal files, containing genealogy, family history, and miscellaneous information.

*Received from Ann Bender, Brooklyn, NY*

**Beth Israel Congregation (Florence, SC)**
Brochure and other information on the congregation.

*Received from Jeffrey Ronald, Florence, SC*

**Bialek, Sheila Hoffman**
Two documentaries produced by Sheila Hoffman Bialek, “A Conversation in My Gardens with Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman of The Jewish Center of the Hamptons: Scholar, Writer, Philosopher” and “Garden Tour in the Hamptons Presents Sheila and Al’s Secret Gardens to Benefit The Jewish Center of the Hamptons.”

*Received from Sheila Hoffman Bialek, New York, NY*
Bildbericht der Woche (Weekly Picture Report)
Fifty Nazi propaganda film strips from 1940–1942 that were prepared by the Nazi Party to be presented at neighborhood party meetings or at small meetings in outlying areas where people had less access to the weekly newsreel at movie theaters.

Received from Tom Moser, Crestview Hills, KY

Bloom, Jack H.
Reminiscences of Rabbi Bloom’s trip to Birmingham, AL, forty-five years after his visit there in 1966 during the Civil Rights movement to march with Martin Luther King, Jr. Together with a letter further describing his work in Birmingham.

Received from Jack H. Bloom, Fairfield, CT

Blumberg, Monica
Talk delivered at Temple B’nai Abraham, Livingston, NJ, relating the experiences of her family in Berlin during the Holocaust. 1 May 2011.

Received from Clifford Kulwin, Livingston, NJ

Brandeis University National Women’s Committee (Cincinnati, OH)
Newsclipping concerning the work and activities of the Gourmet Study Group of the National Women’s Committee, Cincinnati chapter.

Received from Elizabeth R. Petuchowski, Columbus, OH

Cohn, Edward P.
Personal papers concerning his rabbinate at Temple Sinai, New Orleans, LA, together with photographs and other materials pertaining to his public, cultural, and interfaith efforts in the New Orleans and surrounding communities.

Received from Edward P. Cohn, New Orleans, LA

Congregation Mickve Israel (Savannah, GA)

Received from Mr. and Mrs. B.H. Levy, Savannah, GA

Dave, Barbara and Jerry
Donation of Jerry and Barbara Dave’s phonograph album collection, consisting of fifty-eight albums of performances of various and well-known cantors, most notably Robert Segal, Moshe Koussevitzky, and Josef Rosenblatt. 1920–1940.

Received from Barbara and Jerry Dave, Asheville, NC
Eichhorn, David Max
Personal papers concerning his career in the rabbinate and in the Army chaplaincy during World War II.

Received from Jonathan Eichhorn, Silver Spring, MD

Ellenson, David H.
Correspondence with various persons, 2010–2011, pertaining to Dr. Ellenson’s work as president of the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion.

Received from David H. Ellenson, New York, NY

Feingold, Dena A.
Collection of four sermons given by Rabbi Dena Feingold in the fall of 2010 on the two-hundredth anniversary of the founding of Reform Judaism.

Received from Dena A. Feingold, Kenosha, WI

Gertel, Elliot B.
Oral history interviews conducted by Rabbi Gertel with colleagues and associates of Percival Goodman, a major architect of American synagogues from the 1950s to the 1970s, concerning Goodman and his work. Together with personal and rabbinic papers of Gertel concerning his work at Congregation Rodfei Zedek in Chicago, IL.

Received from Elliot B. Gertel, Chicago, IL

Gitelson-Meyerowitz Distinguished Service Award
Programs, publicity, and background materials concerning the presentation of this award to Dr. David Ellenson by Dr. Susan Aurelia Gitelson in memory of Jerome Meyerowitz.

Received from Susan A. Gitelson, New York, NY

Grafman, Milton L.
Numerous items on Rabbi Grafman, including newspaper articles, material on his ordination from Hebrew Union College, tribute program from the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and correspondence with rabbinic colleague Samuel Silver concerning Grafman’s involvement in the Civil Rights struggle in Birmingham, AL, in the 1960s. Together with recordings of guest speakers Lou Silberman and Jakob Petuchowski at the Institute on Judaism for the Christian Clergy, founded by Grafman.

Received from Stephen W. Grafman, Potomac, MD

Greengus, Samuel
Remarks delivered by Dr. Greengus’s grandson, Joshua Schultz, at a ceremony in honor of his grandfather’s retirement from the faculty of Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion.

Received from Joshua Schultz, New York, NY
Grossman, Grace Cohen


Received from Grace Cohen Grossman, Los Angeles, CA

Helfman, Jerome

Letter to the Jewish Welfare Board thanking them for their service to Jewish soldiers during World War II. 29 October 1944.

Received from Jordan Helfman, Cincinnati, OH

Hoffheimer, Harry M.

Correspondence concerning Harry Hoffheimer’s involvement in the Cincinnati chapter of the American Council for Judaism.

Received from Daniel J. Hoffheimer, Cincinnati, OH

Hoffman, Lillian Butler


Received from Sheila Hoffman Bialek, New York, NY

Jonas, Nathan S.

*Through the years: An Autobiography,* concerning Nathan Jonas and his careers as a banker, civic worker, philanthropist, member of the board of education, and a founder of the Jewish Hospital of Brooklyn and the Brooklyn Federation of Jewish Charities in New York City.

Received from David Bardin, Washington, DC

Kahn, Bruce E.

Personal papers concerning his career in the rabbinate and as a Navy chaplain. Includes information on his participation in a memorial service held at the Pentagon on 11 October 2001 for the victims of the 9/11 attacks, which was attended by President George W. Bush, together with an article on Kahn’s deployment to the Iraqi theater of operations after the onset of hostilities there.

Received from Bruce E. Kahn, Silver Spring, MD

Kastner, Merle

Family history and genealogy books for the Kastner and Ostfeld families, written and compiled by Merle Kastner, together with a book on her parents, Morty and Miriam Kastner.

Received from Merle Kastner, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Katchko-Gray, Deborah
Personal papers, including family information and notices on her inclusion in two permanent exhibits of the National Museum of American Jewish History.

Received from Deborah Katchko-Gray, Ridgefield, CT

Kerstine, Mona
50 Years of Marriage, Memories, and Music, a collection of music given to guests at the fiftieth wedding anniversary of Dick and Mona Kerstine (30 July 1961) and Jackie and Dick Snyder (27 August 1961); together with papers and miscellaneous items on the Kerstine family.

Received from Mona Kerstine, Cincinnati, OH

Langsdorf, Abraham
Birth record for Abraham Langsdorf.

Received from Ralph B. Lawrence, Spuyten Duyvil, NY

La Vine, Hal
Recorded recollections of Hal La Vine’s service as an Army Air Corps navigator in the European theater of operations during World War II.

Received from Stanley R. Miles, Louisville, KY

Lefkowitz, David, Sr.
Papers of Rabbi Lefkowitz and his son, Rabbi David Lefkowitz, Jr., including an ark and Torah scroll belonging to them. Together with audio recordings of sermons of David Lefkowitz, Jr., 1953.

Received from Helen Horowitz, San Marino, CA

Leffler, William J., II
Genealogical information on the Ballin, Bruml, Stadler, and Leffler families; together with minutes of two women’s groups of Central Synagogue (New York, NY), containing information of Leffler family relatives who were prominent in these groups.

Received from William J. Leffler, II, Kennebunkport, ME

Lindauer, Shelley

Received from Shelley Lindauer, New York, NY
Magnin, Edgar
Scrapbooks containing articles written by Rabbi Magnin and published in Los Angeles area newspapers. 1961–1981

Received from Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Los Angeles, CA

Mandel Foundation
Records of the Mandel Foundation, a philanthropic organization founded by Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel. The collection documents the work of the Mandel Foundation in promoting Jewish education and nonprofit leadership, primarily through the work of two entities created and sustained by the foundation: the Commission on Jewish Education in North America and the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education. 1984–2011.

Received from Morton Mandel, Cleveland, OH

Meltzer, Alyne
Personal, family, and other papers pertaining to her work in the National Council of Jewish Women and other organizations.

Received from Alyne Meltzer, New York, NY

Merel, Sheldon F.
Articles from the Canadian Jewish News concerning Toronto area cantors and the Toronto Council of Cantors.

Received from Sheldon F. Merel, San Diego, CA

Naamani, Israel T.
Papers concerning Israel Naamani and the Israel Naamani Memorial Lecture at the University of Louisville. Naamani was a Distinguished Professor of Political Science at the University of Louisville and was a former director of the Bureau of Jewish Education.

Received from Edward A. Goldman and Roanete B. Naamani, Cincinnati, OH

National Association of Jewish Chaplains
Collection consisting of annual board meeting and various committee minutes of the NAJC from 1991–2011.

Received from the National Association of Jewish Chaplains, Whippany, NJ

National Association of Retired Reform Rabbis
Recorded interviews with NAORRR members and spouses of deceased members (with transcript summaries) concerning their work and lives in the Reform rabbinate.

Received from Rav Soloff, Lansdale, PA
National Association of Temple Administrators
NATA journals, board minutes, memos, publications, correspondence, and membership rosters. 1976–2006.

Received from the National Association of Temple Administrators, New York, NY

National Home for Jewish Children in Denver (Kansas City Auxiliary)
Cookbook produced by the home and compiled with the assistance of Marge May Ergas of Kansas City.

Received from Aimee Ergas, Farmington Hills, MI

Posner, Philip M.
Correspondence and sermons concerning Rabbi Posner’s involvement as a Freedom Rider during the Civil Rights movement. 1961–1971.

Received from Philip Posner, Ajijic, Jalisco, Mexico

Priesand, Sally J.
Raising up the Light! A Hanukkah Celebration of the ‘First Lights’ of Women Rabbis, a ceremony honoring the first-ordained North American Reform, Reconstructionist, and Conservative women rabbis and Open Orthodox rabba, sponsored by the Synagogue Council of Massachusetts. 2010.

Received from Sally J. Priesand, Ocean Township, NJ

Rabbinic Vision Initiative
Statements and discussion of Reform rabbis concerning the creation, purpose, and mission of the Rabbinic Vision Initiative, an alternative movement within the American Reform community. 2010–2011.

Received from Samuel Joseph, Cincinnati, OH

Reiner, Fred N.

Received from Fred N. Reiner, Washington, DC

Rosenthal, Michael
Rosenthal Genealogy: A Historical Account of Rosenthal, Loeffler, Cohen, Ziman, Greenberg and Wedeles families within the Kansas City Jewish community, created by Michael Rosenthal.

Received from Michael Rosenthal, Overland Park, KA
Rosenzweig, Gershon
Scrapbook, together with published writings by Rosenzweig and biographical data on him; plus photographs of the graves of Rosenzweig and his wife, Hannah, taken by John and Alice Troy.

Received from John and Alice Troy, San Antonio, TX

Rudin, A. James
Correspondence, personal papers, and other materials relating to his work at the American Jewish Committee involving civil rights and other matters. 1958–2008.

Received from A. James Rudin, New York, NY

Sagarin, James L.
Water’s Tale, a children’s story written by Sagarin and illustrated by Freddie Levin.

Received from James L. Sagarin, Wilmette, IL

Saltzman, Murray
Between You and Me: The Words and Wisdom of Rabbi Murray Saltzman, a collection of writings, speeches, and sermons of Rabbi Murray Saltzman, compiled by Bat Yam Temple of the Islands, Sanibel, FL.

Received from Bat Yam Temple of the Islands, Sanibel, FL

Samel, Frieda
My Lost Youth: A Memoir, by Frieda Samel, as told to Jessica Schroeter.

Received from Karen Fox, Los Angeles, CA

Schoolman, Leonard A.
Materials concerning the centennial anniversary of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (1973); the department of camp and youth education of the UAHC; and papers concerning Rabbi Schoolman’s attendance at the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem (1961).

Received from Leonard A. Schoolman, New York, NY

Schussheim, Morton J.
This I Remember (Or Looked Up): A Houser's Story, a memoir of Schussheim’s work in public housing during the Kennedy administration.

Received from Morton J. Schussheim, Washington, DC

Seidel, Arnold
The Seidel Story, a family history written by Arnold Seidel.

Received from Arnold Seidel, Beverly Hills, CA
Sharff, Robert S.
*Appian Way Experience*, a memoir of the final class (1971) to matriculate from the Appian Way campus of the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, Los Angeles, CA.

Received from Robert S. Sharff, Houston, TX

Shur, Bonia
*Celebrating the Life and Work of Bonia Shur*, recording of a concert performed by the Constella Trio in honor of Bonia Shur. January 16, 2011.

Received from Jean Eglington, Cincinnati, OH

Silver, Harold S.
*Converting to Reform Judaism*, together with a review of the book.

Received from Harold S. Silver, West Hartford, CT

Soman, Jean Powers

Received from Jean Powers Soman, Pinecrest, FL

Spiegel, S. Arthur
Writings and memoirs detailing his career as a federal judge in United States District Court as well as his family life and friends, together with his interests in aviation, painting, and automobiles.

Received from S. Arthur Spiegel, Cincinnati, OH

Stix, Charles
Recorded interview with Charles Stix as part of the Veterans History Project, 28 July 2010; together with an article on Stix written by Sara Maratta, December, 2010.

Received from Charles Stix, Cincinnati, OH

Tanenbaum, Marc H.
Two oral history interviews given by Marc H. Tanenbaum, 1972 and 1980, focusing on his life and his work in the American Jewish Committee.

Received from Georgette Bennett, New York, NY

Tanenbaum, Patricia Wise
Obituaries, tributes, and other articles on Mrs. Tanenbaum, following her passing in 2008.

Received from Jerry Tanenbaum, Hot Springs, AR
Task, Arnold P.
Papers and clippings concerning his rabbinate at Congregation Gemiluth Chassodim, Alexandria, LA.

Received from Arnold P. Task, Alexandria, LA

Temple Concord (Syracuse, NY)
Materials concerning the congregation’s service commemorating the one-hundredth anniversary and rededication of their sanctuary. 2011.

Received from Daniel J. Fellman, Syracuse, NY

Temple Emanu-El (Dothan, AL)
History of Temple Emanu-El, Dothan, AL, written by Davis Turner, containing a daily narrative of congregational events from 1941–1946.

Received from Stanley J. Garfein, Tallahassee, FL

Temple Israel (Charleston, WV)

Received from Temple Israel, Charleston, WV

Temple Israel Sisterhood (Charleston, WV)
Minutes, records, and cash books of the Temple Israel Sisterhood, 1874–1965.

Received from Temple Israel Sisterhood, Charleston, WV

Temple Israel (Springfield, MO)
Bulletins, pamphlets, brochures, liturgy, announcements, and other publications of Temple Israel.

Received from Mara Cohen Ioannides, Springfield, MO

Temple Sinai (Washington, DC)
An Archival History of Temple Sinai consisting of recordings of interviews with past presidents of the congregation detailing their experiences as well as personal history of the congregation.

Received from Temple Sinai, Washington, DC

Tobias Family
Genealogy charts, documents, and family data, compiled by Jill Gelb.

Received from Jill Gelb, Chicago, IL
Union for Reform Judaism
Opening remarks and meeting summary of the second annual meeting of the URJ-CCAR Joint Commission on Lifelong Learning, including a focus on education in Israel, 2–4 March 2003. Together with a statement of purpose issued in December 2006 and papers on the Educational Summit Campaign for Youth Engagement, presented at the 2011 biennial meeting of the URJ.

Received from Samuel Joseph, Cincinnati, OH

Union for Reform Judaism
Recording of performances given at the URJ in celebration of Hanukkah, together with a Jewish Federations of North America promotional piece, “What’s Yourish.”

Received from the Union for Reform Judaism, New York, NY

Wohl, Amiel
Personal papers, including a talk given at the Bethesda Baptist Church in New Rochelle, NY, on “Solidarity Sunday.”

Received from Amiel Wohl, New Rochelle, NY

Women of Reform Judaism

Received from the Women of Reform Judaism, New York, NY

Zeitlin, Oreen
Questionnaire and survey results for a project concerning ritual practices observed during bar and bat mitzvah ceremonies, conducted while a student at Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion. 1990.

Received from Philip Miller, New York, NY

Zoberman, Israel
Photo of Rabbi and Mrs. Zoberman with Barack and Michelle Obama, taken at the White House; articles by Rabbi Zoberman from the Congressional Record concerning Israel’s sixty-second and sixty-third anniversaries, the only articles in the Congressional Record for those occasions given from someone outside Congress.

Received from Israel Zoberman, Virginia Beach, VA
### The Educational Advisory Council

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<th>Professor Sara Lee, Co-Chair</th>
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### The B’nai Ya’akov Council

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