

Marni Davis, *Jews and Booze: Becoming American in the Age of Prohibition* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 272 pp.

In 2012 Americans saw a vigorous culture war in which particular Christian groups attempted to assemble political power to impose their values and views on national and state polities. Their efforts, which produced responses both reasoned and hostile, were divisive. This timely and important book is a reminder that these twenty-first century efforts, although vastly different in their particulars, were not new phenomena. The author has mined an impressive list of sources to explain how Prohibition and Jewish acculturation to the new American homeland interacted.

The problem was the consumption and abuse of alcoholic beverages. Every modern society struggles to define appropriate regulations over both the marketing and consumption of alcoholic beverages. Alcohol abuse still plagues American society, even as we have gradually weakened regulatory controls. During the early nineteenth century, when consumption levels were dramatically higher than in later times, some Americans, moved by their Christian values, promoted the concept of voluntary abstinence, of giving up whatever pleasures drinking might provide on behalf of improved family and community life. Toward the end of that century, a later generation—largely Protestants whose traditions harkened back to the British Reformation and the American Second Great Awakening—worked to impose the strictest marketing controls possible on alcoholic beverages, prohibiting their production, distribution, and sale. American Prohibitionists, who were part of an international movement, successfully amended the U.S. Constitution in 1920 to achieve what they expected to be a permanent victory over “the liquor traffic” —that is, the variety of businesses associated with drink. These reformers believed that curbing the marketing of liquor would help their churches persuade Americans, over the passage of decades, to lead fully sober lives.

The Prohibition Movement was thus a religious movement, and it bitterly divided Americans. Although the dry movement gained enormous popularity in the first decades of the twentieth century and attracted the support of a large portion of progressive reformers, including some Jews, it eventually foundered on cultural, demographic, and political changes. Prohibition was repealed in 1933.

The fresh scholarship of this book explains how Jewish acculturation, Jewish business activities, and antisemitism were tied to the culture war surrounding Prohibition. American Jews were attracted to businesses that manufactured, distributed, and sold alcoholic beverages. Some central European Jews who migrated to the United States in the middle decades of the nineteenth century brought experience in the alcohol trades, and they played an important role in the brewing industry and, especially, in the businesses that manufactured

and sold distilled spirits in their new homeland. The later and larger wave of Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe had a history of alcohol retailing, and they became a significant part of the saloon trade in pre-Prohibition America.

Jews helped develop arguments against Prohibition. Aware that they were a small minority targeted by vicious nativism, they denounced the imposition of evangelical values on all Americans. The Constitution protected minorities, in their view, and granted individuals the right to use and dispose of property. "Personal liberty" was the slogan that rallied Prohibition opponents. Jews in the distilling and brewing trades were also intimately involved in efforts to reform the alcohol trades through licenses and other controls, as well as by limiting their number. Their efforts enjoyed some success on local levels in fending off Prohibition zeal. However, during a time when many Americans were promoting progressive causes of regulating business practices that seemed harmful to individuals and communities, and when so many citizens were willing to forego immediate pleasures for what they saw as the common good, Prohibition's popularity grew enormously and led to the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

Resistance to Prohibition remained, however, and eventually was successfully promoted and organized by representatives of the gentile upper class centered in the East, many of whom had always resisted the reform. Again, Jews were significant in this resistance and in the survival of the now-illicit alcohol businesses. Prohibition enforcement carefully exempted sacramental wine for both Christian and Jewish observances, and this exemption provided a gaping hole for the illicit supply of alcohol. Sometimes rabbis abetted this illegal business, while other Jews joined with other criminals to supply liquor illegally to American customers. Jewish resistance to Prohibition was deeply rooted, as was the resistance of other minorities with roots in European customs associated with alcohol consumption. Moreover, these peoples were gaining political strength and social acceptance during Prohibition.

The onset of the Great Depression forged new political coalitions and provided Prohibition opponents with ammunition for repealing the Eighteenth Amendment. They succeeded in 1933. Within a few years the culture war that Prohibition represented faded into American mythology and history. Warfare over different competing religious values and cultural practices, however, clearly remained divisive in American life. This book is an important addition to the literature of cultural conflict in American history.

K. Austin Kerr, professor emeritus of history at The Ohio State University, has written about public policy toward alcoholic beverage industries and their products. His books include Organized for Prohibition: A New History of the Anti-Saloon League (Yale University Press) and American Railroad Politics, 1914–1920: Rates, Wages and Efficiency (University of Pittsburgh Press).

Jonathan Gruber, *Jewish Soldiers in Blue & Gray*. DVD (San Rafael, CA: Indigo Films, 2011), 88 min.

Jewish Soldiers in Blue & Gray, written, produced, and directed by Jonathan Gruber, presents Jews fighting in America's defining war. As explained by Eli Evans at the beginning of the film, "You can read an entire Civil War book written by the great historians and not find any Jewish reference at all." Indeed, beyond the sphere of historians dedicated to the subject, the role of Jews partaking in the war is hardly known. In twelve chapters, *Jewish Soldiers in Blue & Gray* tells the story of Civil War Jewry, from the immigrants' arrival in America ("The Promised Land"), to the life and death of Jewish soldiers ("A Soldier's Last Wish" and "Keeping the Faith"), to Jews joining with other Americans in mourning for Abraham Lincoln.

Historian and Rabbi Bertram W. Korn reflected on the profound effects of the war on all Americans, including Jews. He wrote, "Into the four years of the Civil War were compressed the experiences and lessons and pain of generations."¹ The Civil War was the moment of gravest danger to American national identity. This documentary drew heavily from the two defining works in the field: Korn's *American Jewry and the Civil War* (1951) and Robert Rosen's *The Jewish Confederates* (2000). Excerpts of letters, diaries, and other documents, as well as reenactments, paintings, and interviews with descendants of those Jews who fought, revive the events and bring the players to life. Interviews with prominent historians (Eli Evans, Shalom Lamm, Jonathan Sarna, Robert Rosen, and Gary Zola) contextualize the sources.

Ten thousand of America's 150,000 Jews fought for the Union (7,000) or the Confederacy (3,000) during the Civil War. Typically, they were ordinary individuals in unique circumstances that demanded taking sides. The viewer is presented with brave soldiers such as Leopold Karpeles and Adolph Proskauer, whose biographies serve as a common thread. Karpeles had immigrated to America from Prague, helped slaves escape to Mexico as a Texas Ranger, and enlisted in Massachusetts during the Civil War. He received one of five Congressional Medals of Honor awarded to Jews fighting for the Union. Proskauer, from Alabama and a native German, fought for his Southern home but not for slavery. With each promotion (he finally became a major) he faced graver obstacles, created by his superiors and rooted in antisemitism. He overcame them all.

The documentary brings us into families affected internally by the war, as Union men fought Confederate brothers. We also meet more colorful characters, such as Issachar Zacharie, Lincoln's podiatrist-turned-Union-spy and emissary, who unsuccessfully negotiated peace terms with the South's most prominent Jew, Confederate Secretary of War and State Judah P. Benjamin.

Jewish Soldiers in Blue & Gray has a clear agenda: presenting these fighting Jews filiopietistically as ardent patriots defending their homes. The last frame

before the closing credits emphasizes the guiding theme: “The Civil War is the defining era for Jews in the United States. As a group, their loyalty and valor will never again be questioned. As full members of society they would now strive toward a new goal: living the American dream.” The overriding message is testimony to the Jewish soldiers’ bravery and loyalty and, above all, proof of their participation being anything but marginal, despite their small numbers. As such, this documentary stands firmly in the tradition of Simon Wolf’s *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen* (1895). Jewish soldiers fighting in the Civil War are the most eminent symbol for Jews—as a group—having become fully entitled Americans, either as newcomers or native born. Their participation in the Civil War thus created a strong sense of legitimacy, or, as Jonathan Sarna phrases it: “If you shed blood for a country, then you can really make a claim on that country” (chapter 12, “Rebirth”). Yet, how lasting was the Jews’ sacrifice for this claim in light of later antisemitism in twentieth-century America? By the time Simon Wolf prepared his famous list merely thirty years after the war this sacrifice was already largely forgotten. And the bulk of Jewish immigrants, the millions of east Europeans, was yet to arrive on American soil. Could they indeed profit from their fighting predecessors?

Because of the agenda and the targeted audience of average Americans, *Jewish Soldiers in Blue & Gray* is not exactly nuanced. Unlike Korn’s or Rosen’s work, the documentary touches on wartime antisemitism only briefly, apart from U.S. Grant’s General Orders No. 11 barring Jews from the military district under his control. The outburst of accusations against Jews in the media for being profiteers and ‘knives without fatherland’ is shown sketchily. When families are presented who were divided into Unionists and Confederates, their typical ability to distinguish between conflict and their own family is hardly visible. Jewish soldiers are shown as ardent patriots, but to what degree was conscription (Northern and Southern) a factor in their joining the army? The cause of the war is explained rather briefly by slavery, although the historians interviewed bring the necessary distinctions to light. President Lincoln, once more, is presented as the shining figure of hope and not as the political realist he was. And, given the title and approach, one might expect an outlook to the veteran organizations existing into the next century.

On a side note: Having original documents written by Jewish immigrants read with the seemingly corresponding accents should have been reconsidered. At least the document of the B’nai B’rith lodge protesting Grant’s General Orders No. 11 sounds as if it was read by Arnold Schwarzenegger (maintaining my own accent, I might be biased). Because antisemites of the Civil War period used these German and Yiddish accents to further besmear Jews as aliens to America, the idea for this documentary is, unfortunately, of a tainted quality.

This criticism, however, should not distract from the groundbreaking achievements of *Jewish Soldiers in Blue & Gray*. It deserves full credit for suc-

cessfully bringing Jewish Civil War history ingeniously to the attention of a broader American audience—right where it belongs. It belongs in the classroom. It belongs in colleges and universities. And, above all, it belongs in our common knowledge. For this, *Jewish Soldiers in Blue & Gray* is the perfect medium.

Anton Hieke recently earned his doctorate from the University of Halle-Wittenberg in Germany. His research focuses on the German-Jewish immigrants of Reconstruction Georgia and the Carolinas.

Notes

¹Bertram W. Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War* (Marietta, GA: R. Bemis Publishing, 1951), 217–218.

Daniel P. Kotzin, *Judah L. Magnes: An American Jewish Nonconformist* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2010), 448 pp. + illus.

Daniel Kotzin's volume is a welcome biographical study of a major figure, both in American Jewish life and the development of the Jewish community in Palestine during the first half of the twentieth century. The work, which grows out of a doctoral dissertation Kotzin produced on Magnes at New York University several years ago (full disclosure—I was a fellow graduate student with Kotzin, though we had no contact other than one common seminar), underscores Magnes's long career as a nonconformist. Born in San Francisco in 1877 to a German-Jewish family and educated for the rabbinate at Hebrew Union College, Magnes traveled to Germany to study for his doctorate. In the process, he turned against his liberal assimilationist roots and embraced Jewish nationalism and Zionism, with a strong dose of the cultural Zionism of Ahad Ha'am. Selected successively as rabbi of the Reform strongholds Temple Israel in Brooklyn and Temple Emanu-El in New York, Magnes shook up his congregations by preaching the virtues of Jewish tradition and Hebrew education (a position resembling that of the developing movement of Conservative Judaism). The young rabbi also stood for engagement with Orthodoxy and worked to form bridges between German and eastern European Jews.

Kotzin devotes a chapter to the Kehillah, the multigroup conference Magnes founded to unite New York's Jewish community, and details his leading role with the Kehillah in founding a Bureau of Jewish Education and in arbitrating labor strikes in the fur industry. After 1917, Magnes's pacifism and opposition to U.S. involvement in World War I, plus his subsequent support for Soviet Russia, made him *persona non grata* amid New York's Jewish elites as well as the "Brandeis group" of Zionists surrounding Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis.

Magnes left for Palestine in the early 1920s. There he was named first chancellor of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which he built into a significant educational institution. Yet even in Palestine, Magnes continued his role as

dissenter, challenging mainstream Zionist positions in his insistence on Arab-Jewish dialogue—and eventually in opposition to partition and the creation of a specifically Jewish state.

To his credit, despite his obvious esteem for Magnes's progressive values and his humanist conscience, Kotzin does not idealize the man himself. "Sanctimonious," "haughty" and "self-important" are just a few of the choice adjectives he uses to describe his protagonist. Nor does he gloss over the strange paradoxes of Magnes's career. While sincerely attached to democratic discussion and ideals, which he championed at times to the detriment of his own beliefs, Magnes could act in dictatorial fashion. Kotzin does not shy away from discussing Magnes's brazenly autocratic direction of the Hebrew University—the more intolerable coming from a man with no academic background—which led to a public clash with Albert Einstein, the university's celebrity board member. Though Kotzin's chronology is a bit complex at times, his work is lucidly argued and generally well written. (One exception: He repeatedly refers to Theodor Herzl as "Theodore," a pet peeve of mine.)

The book has a few weaknesses, thankfully none major. Kotzin's study focuses mainly on Magnes's public life and is fairly sketchy on his personal life. We only discover in passing that Magnes resided outside of the city during his years in New York, and we are not told just how he made a living in the years after he left Temple Emanu-El—although Kotzin later mentions that Magnes's patient wife Beatrice had inherited a substantial sum, which made it possible for him to serve without pay as chancellor of the Hebrew University. Also, while Kotzin speaks a good deal of Magnes's relations during his New York years with the Jews of the Lower East Side, his presentation is somewhat incomplete. Kotzin speaks several times of the often-critical attitude of the Yiddish-language press toward Magnes and the way in which he riposted by founding the short-lived journal *Der Tag* as a Yiddish-language organ to disseminate the ideas of the German Jewish community. However, the author does not include any citation of the available Yiddish-language material. (Given that he diligently studied German and Hebrew for this work, it may be unfair to tax him for not mastering a third foreign language or engaging a researcher, but it would have been wiser for him to note and justify such an omission.) Similarly, in discussing the Kehillah and its efforts to support laborers, it would have been useful to add, as Irving Howe reminds us, that Magnes's organization was boycotted on principle by immigrant socialist and labor groups—not least because its funding came from Jewish capitalists such as Jacob Schiff. Finally, because the author cites correspondence between Magnes and the great Jewish educator Cyrus Adler, it would have been nice to know a bit more about their relationship. Perhaps these gaps indicate that Kotzin will later have occasion to expand on this initial study and, like his predecessor Arthur A. Goren, produce a mass of varied works tracing Magnes's career.

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Jonathan B. Krasner, *The Benderly Boys and American Jewish Education* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2011), 498 pp.

Jonathan Krasner's excellent book tells the story of Samson Benderly and his disciples—primarily Alexander Dushkin, Isaac Berkson, Israel Chipkin, Leo Honor, and Emanuel Gamoran—and the effect that they had on American Jewish education in the first half of the twentieth century. Jewish education was truly in dismal shape one hundred years ago. Only small numbers of children were being educated; teachers were mostly eastern European immigrants using old-school methods that did not reach the new generation; the physical plant of schools was grossly inadequate; and there was little communication among schools. Inspired by the progressive educational vision of John Dewey and the organizational culture of public schools, Benderly and his "boys" set out to change all of this through the efforts of the bureaus of Jewish education that they founded and led. In relatively short time they transformed the landscape of American Jewish education. They trained a generation of American-born teachers and raised their salaries, increased the number of girls receiving a Jewish education, created the first professional journals for the field, incorporated methods of informal education in schools, lowered class sizes, gave children proper time to play in purposefully crafted physical spaces, introduced the learning technologies of the day (slides, maps, charts), created the first Jewish educational summer camps, cultivated youth movements, published children's magazines, and helped foster the development of Jewish children's music. Equally significantly, they convinced Jewish leaders that Jewish education was a communal challenge, one worthy of receiving a respectable percentage of the community's limited financial resources.

Benderly and his disciples embraced the Jewish ideological vision of Ahad Ha'am, and this informed their work in multiple ways. They emphasized Jewish peoplehood and viewed Jewish texts, holidays, and the arts as expressions of Jewish national culture rather than as religious artifacts. They had little personal interest in religion and saw it largely as a divisive force in Jewish life. This rendered many of them ill prepared to respond to the rise of Jewish denominationalism, a weakness recognized early on by Mordecai Kaplan, the other important influence on their Jewish ideology. The Benderly circle

saw Hebrew as the foundation of Jewish culture and pioneered the use of the natural method—*ivrit b'ivrit*—in Jewish schools. Like Kaplan, they saw public schools as central to the well-being of American society, and Jewish education, by principle, had to be supplementary. Nonetheless, most of the Benderly boys reconciled themselves to the rise of the day-school movement in the second half of the twentieth century. As Krasner illustrates, these were ideologically committed Jewish leaders who had, with few exceptions, the ability to adjust their ideology in the face of changing trends and then work to preserve those aspects that could be realistically salvaged.

Reformers with a large agenda propelled by a well-articulated Jewish and educational vision are likely to encounter their fair share of opposition and to suffer setbacks and outright failures. This is definitely true of the work of the Benderly circle. Both their successes and disappointments raised core educational issues that the field of Jewish education continues to struggle with. For example: Is it possible for Jewish education to be Hebraic and yet engage students intellectually? Can we successfully incorporate progressive teaching methodologies in the limited time at our disposal? How can we foster a generation of teachers who are both Jewishly knowledgeable and spiritually engaged? How can bureaus of Jewish education best influence the field? Educators who grapple with these issues have much to learn from an encounter with the work of the Benderly boys. But this is not the only constituency that will find this book of interest. Because the history of Jewish education in America is very much the story of how American Jews have sought to define themselves in this land, Krasner's work also is valuable to general students of American Jewish life.

Successful Jewish education requires excellent teachers and leaders. One of the painful realities of contemporary American Jewish life is that the majority of the community's most capable members do not see a career in Jewish education as an attractive life option. The Benderly boys were different. They had many possibilities before them but chose to become educators at a time when salaries were even lower than they are today. Samson Benderly, himself, was a doctor who abandoned medicine to serve as principal of a supplementary school in Baltimore. How can we account for these choices? The book makes a strong argument for the interplay of three factors: vision, outreach, and personal mentoring. Benderly believed that Jewish educators would play a key role in forging the American Judaism of the future. He was a charismatic individual who could excite idealistic young people about the impact that they would have as educators. He and his allies reached out to people who showed interest in Jewish issues, excited them with their vision, and then quickly gave them significant responsibilities in the bureaus and schools. Benderly made his "boys" feel important. Here, too, is a story from which much can be learned.

The Benderly Boys is meticulously researched. It uses personal letters, interviews, detailed organizational minutes, photos, and close reading of curricula

and other texts to construct a vivid picture of the individuals studied and the age in which they worked. The book is peppered with wonderful anecdotes and emotional exchanges, and it continuously raises compelling ideological issues. Krasner is a gifted writer, and his analysis is uniformly fair and insightful. The scope of the book is very large; more than seventy years of initiatives are described in great detail. I found the book to be occasionally overwhelming in this regard. Accordingly, this is one book that is best read in smaller pieces.

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Gil Ribak, *Gentile New York: The Images of Non-Jews among Jewish Immigrants* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 320 pp.

Part of the historian's enterprise is to counter seemingly intuitive narratives people tell themselves regarding their own community. For many American Jews, writes Gil Ribak, this is a tale of a political culture championing the rights of the oppressed, which inevitably derived from the universal values of prophetic Judaism. Ribak's task in his valuable first book, *Gentile New York: The Images of Non-Jews among Jewish Immigrants*, is to countermand this "complacent tale" by examining the ways in which Jewish immigrants in New York City perceived various groups of non-Jews. While American Jews did develop a political defense of others, Ribak argues, those who mistake "the circumstantial for the essential" neglect the nuances of this historical transformation.

Using oral histories, memoirs, the Yiddish and Hebrew press, and institutional and personal correspondence from journalists, social workers, educators, workers, and poets, Ribak's aim is not to create a history of ideas but to develop a "study of images in action." He does so by selecting particular periods and historical incidents to examine in detail. Moving from the beginning of mass migration from eastern Europe to the United States in 1881, to the Red Scare of 1919–1920, Ribak quotes extensively from a repertoire of historical voices, which often expressed contradictory opinions. Ultimately, Ribak aims to show that American Jews moved from a position of self-defense to a defense of others. However, his argument is that this transformation was neither natural nor inevitable; rather, it was the result of a multitude of Jewish voices and opinions that responded to specific historical conditions.

Ribak begins his analysis by arguing that Jewish immigrants did not bring with them any enduring or essential opinions of gentiles that significantly affected their relations with the non-Jews they first encountered in the United States. However, Jewish immigrant culture initially formed an idealized vision of the "Yankee." As Ribak points out, eastern European Jews tended to esteem those whom they considered to be carriers of high culture; indeed, he writes, Jews tended to identify "up," aligning themselves with the highest authority

possible in the hopes of ensuring physical and legal protection and economic security. Surely it was no coincidence, he notes, that this overt fondness for the Yankee reflected the extant racial hierarchies of the early 1900s, which celebrated Anglo-Saxon superiority. While the Yiddish theater of the 1880s and 1890s cast gentiles as villains, there was a dissimilarity between the portrayal of gentiles in general and Yankees in particular. The image of “di Amerikaner” differed from that of other gentiles because it was interwoven with favorable Jewish perceptions of native-born Americans’ middle-class status, education, manners, and confidence.

Immigrant Jews often developed stereotypes of their immigrant neighbors, but Ribak shows that these notions were mutable, sometimes shifting according to context. Anti-Irish jokes and slurs, representing the Irish as drunk, lazy, or violent, abounded. Yet the Irish represented for some Jews a model of middle-class mobility and Americanization, especially in terms of masculinity. Furthermore, anti-Irish prejudices were somewhat tempered in the context of public education, since Jews tended to show great respect for public school teachers, many of whom were Irish women.

Moving away from an emphasis on high-profile cases such as the lynching of Leo Frank in 1915 as the basis for a nascent Jewish-black coalition, Ribak suggests that American Jewish immigrants’ sympathy for African Americans grew out of a broad transformation of values after World War I: As Jews began to utilize the language of minority rights, they applied it to others as well as to themselves. Ribak demonstrates that Jews confronted a dualism between the *image* of African Americans as a similarly oppressed minority, versus their daily reality, which was fraught with prejudice and suspicions against African Americans. Showing that the Yiddish press tended to equate antisemitism and racism more frequently in the interwar period, Ribak argues that scholars ought to move away from a “binary conceptualization of friendship versus self-interest” that has obscured the sometimes ambivalent, overlapping Jewish understanding of African Americans, where instrumentalism and genuine sympathy for others often merged in complicated ways.

In dealing only with the immigrant generation, Ribak’s work raises many questions about how gentiles were perceived by second-generation American Jews and how these perceptions were modulated by economic mobility. How did Jews encounter neighbors or workmates as they moved across the changing social and class landscapes of New York City? And how did Jews change their perceptions of themselves as their perceptions of others changed? These questions perhaps move this book beyond the lens of Jewish studies to a larger contemplation of majority/minority relations.

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Jonathan D. Sarna, *When General Grant Expelled the Jews* (New York: Nextbook, Shocken, 2012), 224 pp.

Because Memphis was a large port on the Mississippi River and a center of cotton trading and illegal speculation, and because many Northern Jews flocked to Memphis, Tennessee became the flash point of the most infamous antisemitic event of the Civil War: General Ulysses S. Grant's issuing General Orders No. 11, expelling all Jews from the military district. This order, issued on 17 December 1862, later called "Grant's Jew order," stated: "The Jews, as a class violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department and also department orders, are hereby expelled from the department [of Tennessee, which included parts of Tennessee, Mississippi, and Kentucky] within twenty-four hours from the receipt of this order." Post commanders were ordered to see that "all of this class of people" be furnished with passes and made to leave the state. Jews were forced out of Paducah, Kentucky; and Holly Springs and Oxford, Mississippi; and some were imprisoned. A Union colonel told one victim that he was forced to flee because, "You are Jews, and neither a benefit to the Union or Confederacy." Jewish leaders protested in Washington, DC. Abraham Lincoln is said to have asked "And so the children of Israel were driven from the happy land of Canaan?" Cesar Kaskel of Paducah told Lincoln, "Yes, and that is why we have come unto Father Abraham's bosom, asking protection." Lincoln replied, "And this protection they shall have at once."

Jonathan D. Sarna, the Joseph H. and Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University and chief historian of the National Museum of American Jewish History, has written a short history that covers General Orders No. 11 (two chapters, fifty pages) and Grant's career and life as it related to Jews (four chapters, seventy-five pages), followed by a twelve-page chronology of American Jewish history and Grant's life.

Sarna does a workman-like job of explaining General Orders No. 11 but does not add a great deal to Bertram W. Korn's excellent chapter on Grant's order ("Exodus 1862") in *American Jewry and the Civil War* (1951).

Sarna, who is at great pains to explain why Grant issued what were the most blatantly antisemitic documents ever put out by the United States government, advances three possible reasons for Grant's expelling "Jews as a class" from his command: (1) orders from Washington (for which there is no proof); (2) military men in the cotton trade wished to exclude Jewish traders ("does not

bear close scrutiny” [46]); and (3) a psychological reaction to Grant’s father’s arrival at the same time to procure a permit in partnership with Jews. This argument says that because Grant “craved his father’s approval, but winced at many of the old man’s shortcomings,” he reacted in anger and blamed it on the Jews (47–48). Certainly his father’s involvement in the illegal cotton trade may have upset Grant, but he had issued similar antisemitic orders prior to his father’s arrival in Tennessee.

Grant, of course, issued the order as a stringent, no-nonsense measure to wage economic war on the South and to prevent trading in cotton, which was highly beneficial to the Southern economy. As to his singling out the Jews, the reason Grant issued the infamous order was simple and straightforward. Jean Edward Smith explained in his biography, *Grant*: “The sentiment expressed in General Orders No. 11 is consistent with a streak of nativism that ran deep in Grant. Xenophobia and anti-Semitism were prevalent throughout the United States in the 1860’s, particularly in the army, and Grant shared the prevailing prejudices” (226).

Sarna then turns his attention to Grant’s race for the presidency in 1868, describing Jews who politically opposed him and others who supported him—of the latter, most notably Simon Wolf, a Jewish lawyer active in Jewish causes, well known to historians of the Civil War for his book, *The American Jew As Patriot, Soldier and Citizen* (1895).

The Democrats, of course, used Grant’s infamous order to try to win over Jewish voters. A Wisconsin newspaper ridiculed Grant in verse:

Who drove the Hebrews from his Camp,
Into the Alligator swamp
Where everything was dark and damp?
Ulysses

Who wrothy at those faithless Jews
Who kept “pa’s” share of Cotton dues,
All further permits did refuse?
Ulysses

No one really knows how Jews voted in the 1868 election. However, after the election, Grant allowed a private letter he had written to be released to the public. “I do not sustain that order,” he wrote of General Orders No. 11, thereby showing the Jews of America he had made a mistake in issuing it. Sarna serves up an interesting narrative of Jewish political activity, Grant’s elections, and his many efforts to demonstrate goodwill toward Jews—by appointing more Jews to his administration than any previous president and by aiding the

oppressed Jews of Russia and Romania. The position of American Jews during the Grant administration dramatically improved, according to Sarna. Grant genuinely believed in protecting the rights of minorities beginning, of course, with the newly freed slaves but including Jews, native Americans, and other minorities. Grant protested the mistreatment of Russian Jews to the Russian minister and to the Russian government. He appointed an American Jew as U.S. consul-general to Romania in the midst of ongoing massacres and widespread mistreatment of Jews in that country. Grant even wrote Benjamin F. Peixotto's letter of introduction to the Romanian government in his own hand to avoid going through his secretary of state, who opposed the appointment.

Grant was the first president to attend the dedication of a synagogue (Adas Israel, an Orthodox congregation in Washington, DC). He sat through the entire three-hour ceremony.

When General Grant Expelled the Jews is readable and interesting, particularly on the significant efforts Grant made on behalf of the Jewish people during his eight years in office. It comes at a time when historians are re-evaluating the standard negative interpretation of the presidency of the great Union general.

My only criticism is the title. A better title of this book would have been, "Ulysses S. Grant: Was He Good for the Jews?" Sarna's answer is an emphatic "yes."

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Alan Snitow and Deborah Kaufman, *Between Two Worlds: The American Jewish Culture Wars*. DVD (Oley, PA: Bullfrog Films, 2011), 70 min.

The longstanding question of, "who is a Jew?" is skillfully interwoven with the timely query, "who speaks for the Jews?" posed by Deborah Kaufman and Alan Snitow in their thought-provoking documentary essay, *Between Two Worlds*. The writer-director-producer pair examined five storylines that crisscrossed the United States and Israel to highlight polarizing debates affecting the future of American Jewry. By exploring the personal identity struggles within their own families, along with very public disputes about economic divestment from Israel and generational gaps in Jewish engagement, Kaufman and Snitow provide an engaging forum for addressing these weighty issues.

Also serving as the documentary's narrators, Kaufman and Snitow first introduce viewers to the 2009 controversy surrounding the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival's screening of *Rachel*, a Simone Bitton documentary detailing the 2003 death of American activist Rachel Corrie as she protested the demolition of Palestinian homes in the Gaza Strip. Local members of the San Francisco Jewish community and national Jewish organizational leaders objected to the film's inclusion in a Jewish film festival, believing that the documentary took

a critical stance on Israeli policy and therefore should be excluded from what they deemed a pro-Jewish, pro-Israel event. Kaufman, founder and former director of the film festival, argued that the “coordinated deluge of internet rage from all over the world” calling for the film’s denouncement and the withholding of donations to the San Francisco Jewish Community Federation for partially funding the festival threatened to end fruitful conversations on Jewish identity. The occasionally defensive tone used when narrating or interviewing highlights Kaufman’s personal connection to this debate yet detracts from an equal understanding of the dispute’s two sides.

Concerns about intermarriage and a declining Jewish birthrate are subsequently examined via a discussion of Taglit-Birthright Israel, a free, ten-day social and educational excursion to Israel for Jewish young adults. *Between Two Worlds* opportunely questions Birthright’s positive effects on Jewish identity following the program’s ten-year anniversary, since its inception in 2000. Snitow and Kaufman suggest that the youngest generation of American Jews is opting for alternative identities that belie Birthright’s aims. Addressing the recent scholarship on Birthright and ethnic tourism published prior to 2011 would have made for a richer, more nuanced discussion of the crucial identity concerns being tackled in this documentary.¹

The filmmakers seamlessly connect the personal story of Bernard Kaufman, Deborah’s father, with the building of a new Museum of Tolerance on contested Jerusalem land to explore the Holocaust’s legacy and the multiple interpretations of the historical past. The documentary ably questions whether the Holocaust serves as a prime determinant in shaping Jewish identity and how lessons from the Holocaust should be used to frame current and future moral issues. In excluding a discussion of the actual progress of the museum’s construction, Snitow and Kaufman elected to focus this specific conversation within the larger documentary’s emphasis on Jewish identity formation, maintenance, and reinvention.

Following an exploration of the Kaufman family tree, viewers learn that Alan Snitow’s mother used to be a communist. What then, posit the directors, is the connection, if any, between Judaism and liberalism and even Judaism and radicalism? An interview with historian Tony Michels reveals that there is nothing inherent in Judaism that lends itself to radicalism, but specific events and places in history cause many Jews to support liberal causes. This discussion nicely segues into the documentary’s final identity issue on Jewish dissent, revisiting the film’s opening sequence on defining what is Jewish and who in the community can decide identity boundaries. Snitow and Kaufman recorded the last night of public testimony surrounding a 2010 motion to override a veto against divestment from Israel at the University of California, Berkeley. In highlighting the communal divide where Jewish proponents could be found on both sides of the debate, the filmmakers supported the students’ passion for

opposing certain Israeli government policies yet cautioned an idealistic, overzealous approach. While focusing on change and dissent, the documentary lacks an analysis of moments of continuity, if any, that exist within the multitude of American Jewish identities.

To their credit, Alan Snitow and Deborah Kaufman ask tough questions about the future of American Jewry in *Between Two Worlds*. This documentary is a must-see for anyone interested in continuing the conversation.

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Notes

¹See for instance, Leonard Saxe and Barry Chazan, *Ten Days of Birthright Israel: A Journey in Young Adult Identity* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press; Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2008) and Shaul Kelner, *Tours That Bind: Diaspora, Pilgrimage, and Israeli Birthright Tourism* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).

Eitan P. Fishbane and Jonathan D. Sarna, eds., *Jewish Renaissance and Revival in America* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2011), 192 pp.

This volume of essays contains three overlapping themes. Its center of gravity, so to speak, is the rise of a generation of native-born Jewish activists in the 1870s and 1880s in Philadelphia and New York who created institutions that helped define Jewish identity in America well into the twentieth century. Key figures included Solomon Solis-Cohen, Max Cohen, Cyrus L. Sulzberger, Philip Cowen, Daniel P. Hayes, Samuel Greenbaum, and Cyrus Adler. The second theme emerges later in the book as studies of Jewish revival in the 1960s, also deemed a revival in the sense of being another reconfiguring of Jewish identity in American society. The third theme, which undergirds all the essays, is the presence-in-absence of Leah Levitz Fishbane, who died suddenly at age thirty-two and to whom the volume is dedicated. The first two chapters of the book were intended as the opening parts of her doctoral dissertation at Brandeis University under Jonathan D. Sarna, one of the editors of the volume. The volume originated as a conference at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Eitan P. Fishbane, the husband of Leah Levitz Fishbane, is the coeditor and the author of a book about her entitled *Shadows in Winter: A Memoir of Love and Loss*. All the contributors knew her personally and remember her with respect and affection.

In his introduction, Sarna limns the background in American Jewish history for the Philadelphia/New York group that Fishbane set out to trace. Somewhat like the post-1870 generation of German Jews who, having finally achieved emancipation, were confident in their place in the larger society; despite the

upsurge of antisemitism, members of this group were characterized by an “ease and naturalness in their identity as native-born American Jews.” Dedicated to the “re-Judaization” of American Jewish youth, they created or significantly reshaped a remarkable range of institutions: the American Jewish Historical Society, the YMHA (reoriented to serve Jewish cultural as well as social and athletic interests), the *American Hebrew* (a prime periodical for many decades), the Jewish Publication Society of America, and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

In his contribution to the volume, Arthur Kiron, the curator of the Judaic collections at the University of Pennsylvania library, notes the devotion of the Philadelphia group in promoting serious Jewish reading in Jewish subjects. Shuly Rubin Schwartz, the dean of graduate and undergraduates studies at JTS, unravels the genesis of the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, a pioneering work in modern Jewish culture. Anticipating later essays in the book, she calls attention to the second life it has enjoyed on the Internet. It would be a mistake to consider this burst of self-affirmation in the late nineteenth century as far less a Jewish commitment than the in-your-face Zionism of a generation later. As young Jews concerned with the future of Judaism, this group did not want to become rabbis; they wanted to make their marks as lay leaders. They were critical of the direction in which they thought Isaac Mayer Wise’s seminary was headed, symptomized by the notorious “*trefa* banquet” of 1883 and the Pittsburgh Platform two years later. They were troubled by the appeal of Felix Adler’s Ethical Culture movement. Whatever their personal level of traditional religious observance may have been, they became ardent supporters of the Jewish Theological Seminary, founded in 1886.

The volume also includes a piece by Paul Mendes-Flohr on Emil G. Hirsch, the rabbi of Temple Sinai in Chicago, who was appointed professor of “rabbinic literature and philosophy” at the University of Chicago. Mendes-Flohr notes that “among the more than forty senior and consulting editors of the *Jewish Encyclopedia* he was the only to hold an academic appointment in postbiblical Judaism at a secular institution of higher learning”—and this happened twenty years before a lectureship in Jewish studies was established at the University of Leipzig. One of Hirsch’s congregants was the illustrious Julius Rosenwald of Sears and Roebuck fame, who contributed critical financial support toward the betterment of the education of African Americans at a time when doing so was hardly normative. These two men together represent, according to Mendes-Flohr, obligations that had been so important in liberal German-Jewish circles in the nineteenth century: *Besitz und Bildung*, the responsibility of “property” and the high esteem of education.

The final pieces add insight by drawing on personal experiences. David Kaufmann describes the more assertive Jewishness of celebrities who came to the fore in American popular culture in the 1960s, when being “too Jewish” disappeared as a barrier to acceptability and success. Arthur Green traces the

European background of the “Neo-Hasidism” of Aaron Zeitlin on young people, such as Zalman Schacter and Green himself, who formed the famed Somerville Massachusetts *havurah* of the early seventies. (A demur: Some readers may reject passing reference to the American Judaism of the 1950s as having been quite as banal and defensive as these authors imply.) Arnold Eisen sums up the book’s themes in an afterward, deftly citing his own Philadelphia Jewish credentials.

In conclusion: A defining feature of “modernity” is that it is a state of almost perpetual redefinition. There was not just one modernity but a chain of modernities reflecting the persistent transformation of society and culture. Exponents of modern Judaism, therefore, have had to repeatedly devise new organization models, modes of communication, channels, and media to make the heritage available to the general Jewish public. This book describes two links in that chain of diverse movements of renewal devised by emerging generations, each with its own vision of how to preserve and render accessible, meaningful Jewish continuity.

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Jack Wertheimer, ed., *The New Jewish Leaders: Reshaping the American Jewish Landscape* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2011), 376 pp.

A number of years ago I did a survey of American Jewish leaders (*American Jewish History*, June 1981). It was fairly easy to get the names of the people I wanted, since the *American Jewish Year Book* included all of the major national organizations, their addresses, and the names of their presidents and executive directors. It was not a large list, and while there may have been some unaffiliated local organizations, they were few in number and had not appeared on the radar. Therefore, I looked forward to this new collection of essays to see how much had changed in the last three decades. The short answer—quite a bit, I think.

Wertheimer, a professor of American Jewish history at the Jewish Theological Seminary, and those who wrote these essays claim that the landscape of American Jewish leadership has been changed radically by the growth of what they call “non-establishment” Jewish groups, whose reasons for existence vary from simple socializing to support for Israel, from self-education to criticism of Israel and emphasis on finding peace, and in at least one instance, networking with other Jews in their field for business purposes. The one thing they all seem to have in common is a commitment to social justice. (The authors of the seven articles are Wertheimer, Steven M. Cohen [two], Sarah Bunin Benor, Ari Y.

Kelman, Shaul Kelner, and Sylvia Barack Fishman and her co-authors, Rachel Bernstein and Emily Sigalow.)

The picture is incomplete, however, because the writers have all chosen organizations whose leaders are in their thirties and forties, and nearly all of which are nonestablishment. These groups speak to younger Jews whose interests are far different from the generation that came of age between the Holocaust and the Six-Day War. Whereas the establishment organizations are primarily concerned with Jewish survival and the safety of Israel, the younger generation sees these issues as less important. In part, as the authors explain, American Jews in their thirties and forties are well assimilated into the larger non-Jewish society and do not feel the sense of otherness that was so characteristic of first- and second-generation Jews.

The leaders of the groups (listed in appendixes to the chapters) have more Jewish education and cultural background than the rank-and-file, and as might be expected, those who are religiously observant tend toward Orthodoxy, although the authors point out a number of caveats. The members of these groups appear to be, for the most part, less well versed in the tradition, and while some are looking to educate themselves, others are not that interested. It is, to say the least, a curious bag.

The authors utilize a description by Jonathan Sarna of the difference between the “bloomed” and the “groomed”—the former those leaders who set up new organizations and lead by their own charisma, and the latter those who have been accepted into traditional Jewish groups and have been groomed for leadership. Here is where I find the book most disappointing. All of the authors agree that in many areas the new organizations have prospered because many of them have received help—financial and otherwise—from the local federations or from foundations that have at least partly Jewish missions. But we learn nothing about these establishment groups, who is leading them now, and what those twenty- and thirty-year-olds who are being groomed see as their future.

One may, as many of these people do, bemoan the dinosaur quality of the federations, but at least some of the younger Jews aspire to leadership there. What do the leaders of these groups think about the proliferation of small groups (and most of them are small), which are little interested in the federation agenda and have very mixed views of Israel?

This book affords an interesting but incomplete description of a new generation of Jewish leaders. It is like looking at a baseball or football team and focusing just on the rookies. There is a larger context that is needed here.

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