

REVIEW ESSAY

Deborah Dash Moore, ed., *City of Promises: A History of the Jews of New York*, 3 vols. (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 1108 pp.

New York City is synonymous with many things, none more significantly than Jews. The relationship has not always been easy. Jesse Jackson shamefully twisted its tensions into his startling 1984 epithet—“Hymietown”—the modern bookend to Peter Stuyvesant’s 1654 slurs in resisting New Amsterdam’s first refugee Jews: “a deceitful race—such hateful enemies and blasphemers of Christ.” In contrast, *City of Promises* offers a rich, new, three-volume history of Jews’ unprecedented engagement with New York City. It demonstrates how an unlikely relationship unevenly but persistently exposed bigotry’s perpetual desperateness and how three centuries of interactions among a people and a city produced one of the most remarkable cultural and religious configurations in American history and the modern West. *City of Promises* does not sugarcoat its history; the bigots between Stuyvesant and Jackson have their due. But *City of Promises* takes advantage of every new study and the authors’ own original scholarship. It creates a vast, compelling account of a people’s historical experience with a town that, more than any other, served as the “city of promise” for so many who ventured for so long, across every sea and much land, to America and New York still pursuing a secure future.

So what is *City of Promises*? Many things, not the least quite beautiful and more than substantial: three volumes running to just over one thousand pages, deftly produced by New York University Press, with ample illustrations and snugly housed in an attractive slipcase suggesting care and stature. Guided by Deborah Dash Moore, who served as general editor and provided a forward for the project, *City of Promises* divides the chronological history of Jews in New Amsterdam and New York City into three eras, emphasizing the segmented yet remarkably coherent internal development of the city’s Jewish communities. Howard B. Rock’s *Haven of Liberty* carries the story from its unpromising Dutch start through the Civil War, conveying the persistence of Jews who negotiated the shift from Sephardic to largely German immigrants, the American Revolution, and a looming Civil War. Annie Polland’s and

Daniel Soyer's *Emerging Metropolis* overlaps Rock's story slightly as it focuses on the dramatic transformation of New York's reasonably settled pre-Civil-War Jewish community into the massive, complex, often conflicting and conflicted Jewish communities wrought by late-nineteenth-century Eastern European Jewish migration, which forever changed New York City Judaism, the city, and America. Jeffrey S. Gurock's *Jews in Gotham* then tracks the bumptious, wrenching crises and achievements that recast Judaism yet again through the Depression, Holocaust, renewed migration after WWII, and new fissures and alliances in religion, politics, culture, and economics quite unlike those of earlier years. Each volume concludes with a refreshing essay by Diana Linden on visual and material culture among New York Jews in the period covered by each book.

Reviews of multivolume histories often include a disclaimer, something like, "a review cannot adequately convey the richness of the history these multiple volumes describe." Of course, this is true in general, as well as about the three volumes of *City of Promises*. Anyone who cares about New York City, its history, its peoples and Jews, their history, and their peoples should read these books, whether individually or collectively. And readers should understand how fully the authors have undertaken a difficult task of synthesis. The serious and not-so-serious published histories of Jews in New York City have long ago passed beyond our capacity to count. All the authors of *City of Promises* faced substantial tasks of compression, if only because books and articles on the history of New York Jews already outstretch published histories of city Catholics and Protestants combined.

One institutional reason for this proliferation of modern scholarship on New York Jews deserves acknowledgement: No other religious or ethnic group in the city has the welter of associations supporting historical inquiry to compare with the American Jewish Historical Society, the American Sephardi Federation, the Leo Baeck Institute, the Yeshiva University Museum, and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, which are collected together at the Center for Jewish History in lower Manhattan. Add to those the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati and similar institutions across the United States, and the many Jewish studies programs in American colleges and universities, such as the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies that Deborah

Dash Moore heads at the University of Michigan. Their focus extends far beyond the history of Jews in New York City, but they give life to projects like *City of Promises*, and it is impossible to imagine such a project without them.

City of Promises employs a chronological division well adapted to its specific topic. *The Jewish People in America*, the 1992 history edited by Henry L. Feingold, divided the American past into five volumes, presumably because the broader national scope required greater detail in each volume. But the editor and authors of *City of Promises* have created three wonderfully coherent volumes that comprehend swaths of New York City's ethnic, religious, cultural, intellectual, and economic history with remarkable naturalness.

Howard Rock's *Haven of Liberty: New York Jews in the New World, 1654–1865* covers its chronological sweep so smoothly that readers may not immediately realize how many cultures, times, and decades they have crossed in 250 pages. Attention is inevitably drawn to the first recorded appearance of Jews in New Amsterdam in 1654, their rough reception, near disappearance, then their thinly documented reappearance in the 1680s and 1690s. Rock tells this story, often through only shards of evidence, with a persuasiveness that opens out onto the emergence of a substantial Jewish community in eighteenth-century New York and its reshaping between the Revolution and the Civil War. He deftly integrates biographical sketches into a larger cultural and political account and provides a human dimension exploring differences between the colonial Jewish community and the already varied communities of the early national and antebellum eras. He portrays the dilemmas and opportunities of post-Revolutionary republicanism through simple subheadings—"A Hamiltonian Synagogue" and "A Jeffersonian Synagogue"—and his discussions of the intellectual and religious views of Abigail Franks in the 1730s and 1740s and Grace Nathan in the 1810s and 1820s underscore the gendered breadth of this early Jewish community life. Rock offers particularly fine accounts of early national and antebellum culture that enlarge his descriptions of divisions and tensions inside New York City's synagogues and varied Jewish communities, creating affecting portraits of New York Jews who were modernizing, yet far from modern.

Annie Polland and Daniel Soyer rightly employ the qualified title, *Emerging Metropolis*, with the subtitle, *New York Jews in the Age of*

Immigration, 1840–1920, to stress the rapid yet still incomplete modernization of both the city and its Jews in the mere eighty years between 1840 and 1920. A short panorama digests immigrant perceptions and hopes for New York and America and signals just how thoroughly immigration and its impact dominated the Jewish experience in the city for the entire period. In every decade and in every way, the rise, strength, and waning of Jewish immigration caught hold of everything Jewish in New York, surely more than was true for the many Jews still spread across rural America and its smaller cities well past 1900. Polland's and Soyer's stress on neighborhoods and networks helps them explain the basis of collective Jewish life as well as its fissures, religious and secular. The chapter "Moorish Manhattan" is an especially sophisticated yet compact portrait of religious enthusiasms and tensions, replete with innumerable organizational and liturgical complications; it evokes the sense that Jews could as much be strangers to each other as they were to gentiles. The accounts of ostensibly secular Jewish culture make clear the persistent links to religious elements in New York Jewish culture, all the more for their superficial quietude. And the authors write of Jews in New York politics and culture with a fullness well prepared by the preceding chapter, startlingly and truly titled "Capital of the Jewish World."

Like Polland and Soyer, Jeffrey Gurock begins *Jews in Gotham: New York Jews in a Changing City, 1920–2010* with neighborhoods, then amply reveals how challenges and transformations within them took remarkably different form than those of the previous eighty years. Gurock charts the vicissitudes and importance of a residential mobility hampered by ethnic and religious tensions and legal discrimination until the 1950s; the thrust of Jews into colleges, especially City College, with its broad effects on Jewish professional and cultural life; and the emergence of a remarkable Jewish intellectual elite—some radical, some Zionist, some neither—all intense and with real national and internal clout. He sets New York City's postwar Jewish experience in the sad context of broad city tensions about race, labor, renewed immigration, riots, suburbanization, and finance, epitomized in the famous photograph Gurock reprints of Mayor Abraham Beame holding the *Daily News* with its graphic, five-word headline, "Ford to City: Drop Dead," summarizing more than checkbook issues. Major figures in Gurock's final chapters—Betty Friedan, Bella Abzug, Jacob Birnbaum, Meir Kahane, Rudolph

Giuliani, and Michael Bloomberg—illustrate the polarization that reshaped public expressions of New York City Jewish life between 1990 and 2010, even if quieter Judaisms described in previous chapters sustained traditions and practices drawing no notoreity. Discomforts notwithstanding, Gurock's concluding judgment mirrors the broader narrative of *Jews in Gotham*: that tensions among twentieth-century New York City Jews also revealed their dominant importance to a three hundred year old city, which despite disappointments still offered "the best chance for Jews to live safe, secure, and meaningful lives with all others within a city of promises" (222).

Each volume ends with a fascinating essay by Diana L. Linden on the visual and material culture of the histories described. Linden, an art historian, offers absorbing discussions that sharpen the historical sensibility precisely because they often move beyond it. In *Haven of Liberty* Linden describes *Still-Lives*, a 2009 installation by artist Susan C. Dessel that included the six women who were among the first twenty-three Jewish refugees in the city in 1654; Dessel believed that doing so "recuperate[d] the names and identities of Jewish women who were denied access to the historical record of New York and their culture" (*Haven of Liberty*, 276). In *Emerging Metropolis*, Linden not only discusses objects and photographs documenting nineteenth-century Jewish immigration to the city but artist Carol Hannoy's 1996 Ellis Island installation, *Welcome to America: An Installation Documenting Jewish Women's Immigration to America*. Linden's essay in *Jews in Gotham* encompasses an encyclopedic mix of art and history, including Theresa Bernstein's 1923 painting, *Zionist Meeting: Madison Square Garden*; a 1929 photograph of Jews at Harlem's Moorish Zionist Temple; a 1940 Wegee (Arthur Fellig) photograph, *Max Is Rushing in the Bagels to a Restaurant on Second Avenue for the Morning Trade*; and a photograph, "Nan One Month after Being Battered," from Nan Goldin's 1984 *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*. Most of Linden's choices actually represent traditional historical materials that are insightfully discussed and often set out in beautiful color photographs. Some of Linden's choices may startle readers. But that is the point. They highlight the capacity of visual and material culture to dig into the historical record, reminding us that seeing is as much the reader's work as it is the work of the scholar or even of the historical record and its frequently all-too-accurate reflection of the past's vacancies.

Could one want more? Reviewers often fuss at narrow, monographic histories, while panoramic histories like *City of Promises* become free targets for everyone's alternate wishes. Might *Haven of Liberty* have offered a full-page color photograph revealing the stunning beauty of Myer Myers's wondrous pre-Revolutionary Torah finials rather than a small black and white print? Might *Emerging Metropolis* have said more about Felix Adler and especially about Solomon Schechter? Might the transformation of Yeshiva College into a modern university and Joseph Soloveitchik's importance at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) have received attention in *Jews in Gotham*? Probably. But there is no end to criticisms, wishes, and desires. If *City of Promises* stimulates demands for more here and possibly less there, the volumes and their authors will have done their work. Their achievement amid the compression required in shaping a broad narrative history lies in the striking books they have created. No other New York City group or people, or group or people in any American city, has had its history charted with such sophistication, scholarly depth, and discerning, often critical, analysis.

Individually and collectively, the volumes in *City of Promises* mark a new high in American urban, ethnic, and religious history. They will stimulate readers to know more, even as they demonstrate their authors' remarkable success at synthesizing what we do know. These are wonderful books, testaments to the best in American history. They deserve wide attention as reconstructions of a remarkable past and as models for many more like them.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Janice Rothschild Blumberg, *Prophet in a Time of Priests: Rabbi “Alphabet” Browne, 1845–1929* (Baltimore: Apprentice House, 2012), 415 pp.

In 1854, six Jewish ministers in America held lifetime appointments. Samuel Myer Isaacs, Jacques J. Lyons, Leo Merzbacher, and Morris J. Raphall held positions at the largest congregations in New York. In addition, James Gutheim of New Orleans and Isaac Mayer Wise of Cincinnati were the rare exceptions to erratic rabbinic job security outside of Gotham. The vast majority of the Jewish clergy signed one-year contracts and served at the whim of fickle congregants.¹ Due to the thousands of emigrants from Central Europe during the mid-nineteenth century, synagogue employment was a buyer’s market in the United States. Many Jews, with or without proper rabbinic credentials, presented themselves to congregations, hoping to gain employment as a “*hazzan*,” “reader,” “reverend,” or “lecturer.” This situation created a good deal of instability for rabbis and their families who all too often led itinerant careers, serving multiple congregations in short amounts of time.

Until now, American Jewish historians have passed over the stories of these itinerant rabbis in favor of the more “successful” ministers, such as David Einhorn, Isaac Leeser, Max Lilienthal, and Wise. These are the men who established newspapers, conferences, and educational societies that helped nurture American Judaism. Just as important, however, are the oftentimes scandalous adventures of the many who did not flourish. One such individual was Edward Benjamin Morris Browne, better known as “Alphabet” Browne because he appended all of his many educational titles whenever he signed his name. In a biography of her great-grandfather, Janice Rothschild Blumberg did not withhold any embarrassing detail from Browne’s career, which extended to thirteen pulpits and spanned about fifty years.

Alphabet Browne was born in the Austro-Hungarian town of Eperies in 1845. He moved to the United States in 1865 as a bachelor with considerable secular and rabbinic training. After a short stay in New York, Browne quickly found himself as a lodger and student in Wise’s Cincinnati home. There, Browne received an intimate lesson in professional rabbinics from one of the great politicians of the American Jewish

pulpit. In addition, Browne accompanied Wise—the so-called “moderate reformer”—on several trips to the East Coast, where the two lobbied and debated with rabbis and congregations to accept Wise’s prayer book and his fast-spreading brand of American Judaism. Wise eventually ordained Browne and sent him to a small pulpit in Montgomery, Alabama.

His Montgomery adventure was emblematic of Browne’s pulpit career. Judging Browne’s New Year’s sermon too radical for their tastes, the Montgomery congregants speedily dismissed him. He recovered soon enough to find available synagogues in Wisconsin and thereafter Indiana (where Browne met his wife). Alphabet’s sojourns also took the Browne family to Georgia, New York, and back to the Midwest. Each stint tested Browne’s ability to maintain good relations with his lay leaders. Most of the time, he failed. The author presumed that Browne’s failures had much to do with his ego and growing paranoia. That may be, but his experiences with authoritarian laities were the sort of accounts to which many in his time could relate.

To tell Browne’s story, Blumberg’s most important primary source was an unpublished autobiography that Browne wrote in the 1880s. Making good use of this document, Blumberg connected her subject to many other themes in American Jewish history. In those pages, Browne revealed many details about Wise’s personal life, specifically with regard to his children. As the founding editor of the *Jewish South*, Browne stood out as a prominent Jewish voice in presidential politics, social justice, and the fight to install a Jewish chaplain at West Point. In his more advanced years, he spent his time on Manhattan’s Lower East Side, serving as a vocal advocate for the hundreds of thousands of Russian Jews who filled the docks at Ellis Island in the final decades of the century. Browne corresponded with both American icons and Jewish leaders, including Ulysses S. Grant, Theodore Roosevelt, and Theodor Herzl. Blumberg’s biography, therefore, offers insight into the world of itinerant clergy as well as into the historical episodes that Browne encountered throughout his life. Blumberg does her best to corroborate Browne’s accounts with other sources, such as contemporary articles that appeared in Wise’s *Israelite*. When unable to confirm Browne’s claims, Blumberg was careful to cue her readers of this lack of definitiveness.

Perhaps the only disappointing feature of this fluidly written biography is the lack of an index. Browne encountered so many important

figures and got involved in numerous key issues of his day, and an index to efficiently find these people and points would have better served historians looking to include Alphabet Browne in future scholarship. There are also a few typos in the book, particularly in the notes section. Nevertheless, Blumberg's work—one that reveals a forgotten historical figure and explores the underbelly of the nineteenth-century American rabbinate—more than overcomes these deficiencies.

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Note

¹“The Appointment of Jewish Ministers in America,” *The Israelite* (27 October 1854): 124.

Shirli Brautbar, *From Fashion to Politics: Hadassah and Jewish American Women in the Post World War II Era* (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2012), viii + 152 pp.

When Shirli Brautbar was in graduate school she began pondering whether Hadassah history was important. This is a question scholars of women's clubs and societies inevitably ask. Dismissed by their contemporaries as frivolous, meddling do-gooders interested far more in luncheons and fashion shows than politics, members of women's voluntary associations remain underappreciated for sustained public activism that often leads to significant domestic policy achievements and foreign policy goals. Brautbar, assistant professor at Nevada State College, argues that Hadassah has a usable past that enriches our understanding of the various methods and locations of women's empowerment that culminated in grassroots feminist activism during the 1960s and 1970s. From *Fashion to Politics* draws our attention to the phenomenon of tremendous membership growth of women's voluntary associations after World War II. Hadassah, as other women's clubs and organizations, functioned as a small, elite group until the mid-twentieth century. After World War II, women, who were essential contributors to mainstream economic and political life on the home front, sought to maintain their influence and worth in postwar America by joining civic, service, and religious

women's clubs. Hadassah's membership swelled to more than 300,000; World War II and the founding of Israel revitalized the organization.

Despite this development, scholars have focused on the early years of Hadassah. Brautbar, however, argues that Hadassah's postwar history is perhaps more important. With large memberships subsidizing the creation of bureaucratic institutions with paid staff and a clear purpose shaped by World War II service, women's clubs were more visible and exercised more social and political clout than they ever had before or since the post-World War II period. Brautbar understands the significance of this development within Hadassah: "The organization's lobbying activity and philanthropic work often served explicitly political purposes and carried important political repercussions, even influencing the shifting geopolitical realities of the Cold War" (2). By reevaluating Hadassah's philanthropic mission, public service work, educational efforts, and rhetoric in the context of world and domestic events, Brautbar presents a revisionist history that questions further the accuracy of the idea, popularized by the waves metaphor, that the postwar period was a nadir in feminist history. She argues that Hadassah's emphasis on political organizing and commitment to increasing women's authority in the Jewish community, particularly within the Zionist movement, anticipated feminist activism.

From *Fashion to Politics* is an organizational history to a great extent. Brautbar attempts to support her claim that Hadassah was "arguably one of the most influential Jewish organizations in the world" (1) by examining its voluminous records. Her arguments are informed by an array of organizational materials: brochures, minutes, conference resolutions, press releases, annual reports, memos, newsletters, and yearbooks. Through painstaking research in the minutia of daily operations, Brautbar is able to relate Hadassah's aspirations to become an important force in domestic politics and foreign affairs. Conference resolutions, committee assignments, and publicity document a resolve to engage with the wider world. To wield more influence in foreign affairs, Hadassah formed an alliance with American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) in the 1960s. Still, an evaluation of Hadassah's actual influence is harder to verify from this organizational perspective, even though Brautbar makes claims for the presence of deliberate activism. For example, Brautbar's explanation of Hadassah's domestic political activities does not extend

beyond the confines of its American Affairs Committee and *Hadassah Newsletter*. She demonstrates that Hadassah invited speakers to its annual conventions but beyond that only discusses in vague terms the organization's commitment to coalition politics to promote specific public policy goals. The extent of rank-and-file members' political activism is also an important question that is left unanswered. National records present the officers' perspectives. We learn that Hadassah steadfastly promoted civil rights and civil liberties during the McCarthy era by testifying before Congress and passing resolutions during conventions, which, to be sure, are important political acts. How, or if, rank-and-file members entered mainstream politics is unknown.

Brautbar uses organizational records more convincingly to provide a nuanced analysis of Hadassah's rhetoric and effort to create new forms of Jewish women's identity. She finds "contradictions and complexities" in Hadassah's rhetoric and activities in Cold War America, with its conservative politics and rigid conception of women's roles in society (3). Hadassah managed to establish a public role for Jewish women without social opprobrium by politicizing motherhood. At the same time, the group's progressivism was unwavering in the areas of civil rights and civil liberties. Yet, its foreign policy positions, informed by the Zionist movement and Cold War politics, were more conservative. Brautbar examines the tension between a commitment to "cultural pluralism" and rhetorical imperative to present "Arab nations as a threat to Israel and democracy" (4).

Outreach to members from national headquarters emphasized a public role for the growing number of suburban women in Hadassah's ranks and offered an antidote to the masculinist Zionist movement. The national organization encouraged members to expand their maternal role into the wider world and offered an alternative vision of Zionism with women at the center of vital social welfare work. As other large women's organizations, Hadassah circulated educational materials with entreaties to become educated world citizens. Suggested programs and a civic engagement "Master Kit" sent to chapters attempted to make political activity an essential part of Hadassah life (104). Publications offered alternatives to the constraining housewife role by telling the life stories of professional women, and fashion shows became political by showcasing the lives and work of Israeli women. Such materials and activities offered

models for a life outside of the confines of the suburban home. Brautbar makes a convincing case that Hadassah was a serious feminist organization in the 1950s and 1960s.

Brautbar carefully examines Hadassah's ideological perspectives, endeavors toward political education, and prodigious fundraising. She is less successful at explaining how philanthropy, education, and publicity contributed to the exercise of real influence in world and public affairs. She misses an opportunity to explore the various forms of activism consistent with engagement in mainstream politics. Large membership alone cannot ameliorate women's status or determine foreign policy. Other scholars of women's clubs and societies during this period have explored how groups coalesced and formed arrangements with government agencies to promote women's issues, civil rights, and human rights worldwide. The National Council of Jewish Women, while smaller than Hadassah and, according to Brautbar, less political, joined other women's organizations to promote social change under the auspices of the Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor. NCJW embraced alliances with the YWCA, the League of Women Voters, the Business and Professional Women's Clubs, the National Council of Catholic Women, and the National Council of Negro Women to develop policies on civil rights and women's issues. The Women's Bureau–sponsored National Women's Committee on Civil Rights, President's Commission on the Status of Women, and state commissions on the status of women ensured some measure of policy-making gravitas. Hadassah, however, seems to stand alone. Publications and conventions project aspirations, but significant policy victories more often than not come from working in conjunction with other groups and lobbying from the grassroots.

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Caitlin Carenen, *The Fervent Embrace: Liberal Protestants, Evangelicals, and Israel* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), xvii + 265 pp.

In *The Fervent Embrace*, Caitlin Carenen explores the fascinating interplay between religion and American foreign policy with respect to Israel. In her terms, this partnership has created a “symbiotic relationship between personal piety and foreign policy” (xv). Unlike previous treatments of Israel’s relationship with American Christians, which focus on mainline Protestants or Protestant fundamentalists, Carenen surveys a broad range of theological perspectives. She covers most of the twentieth century, from Protestant response to increasing European persecution of Jews in the 1930s through the changed religio-political landscape of the first decade of the twenty-first century. In addition to the analysis of American Protestant society as a whole, Carenen presents three in-depth case studies to further illustrate her findings.

The book is a welcome complication of the generally accepted narrative of American Protestantism’s shifting attitudes toward Israel. Previous histories have revealed an apparent swell of pro-Zionist sentiment among mainline Protestants in the mid-twentieth century, followed by a sharp reversal of attitudes, with conservative evangelicals seeming to rise to take their place as activists for Israel. Carenen argues that this is more about perception than reality. Throughout the twentieth century, mainline Protestants and conservative evangelicals have debated Zionism, a give and take that reflects differing theological approaches as much as attitudes toward Jews and Judaism. Although her focus is on Protestants, Carenen’s choice to include Jewish responses to this Protestant debate adds dimension to the story.

Beginning with the height of American antisemitism in the 1930s and progressing chronologically through World War II, the establishment of the modern state of Israel, continued conflicts in the Middle East, and the rise of conservative evangelicals to prominence in American politics, Carenen’s presentation is broad yet nuanced. Mainline Protestant relationships with Jews correlate with continuous reflection upon and revision of theological positions in response to world events. This reflective impulse contributed to an ecumenical spirit and fed the popularity of interfaith dialogue. Meanwhile, conservative evangelical focus on their perception of prophetic fulfillment in the same geopolitical realities

meant they tended to see confirmation of their theology rather than challenge. They generally rejected ecumenism. Mainline Protestants and their conservative evangelical counterparts divided over Zionism in the 1930s and remained divided throughout the rest of the twentieth century. By and large, however, American Protestants supported the establishment of Israel. Carenen also addresses how American and Israeli Jews responded to religious tensions in the United States in order to shape American foreign policy on Israel. In spite of the theological debate, however, America's position vis-à-vis Israel was always more a matter of global politics than theological issues. The Cold War's concerns helped create and sustain favor for Israel.

In the 1950s, evangelicals made the shift from observers to activists. Ultimately, mainline activism on behalf of Israel drifted away, not so much because of a lack of support for Israel, but because it appeared unnecessary. Major shifts in the religious landscape in America in later decades correlated closely with shifts in U.S.-Israel relations following the Six Day War. Mainline Protestants troubled by seeming disregard for Palestinians after Israel's victory over Egypt became less inclined to support Israel, but evangelical growth was ending the mainline's day in the sun. Thus, overall American support for Israel remained steady, but together, mainline criticism of Israel and unchanging evangelical exclusivism brought ecumenism almost to a halt.

As mainline Protestantism lost members to evangelical denominations emphasizing orthodoxy in the 1970s, the tone of American support for Israel shifted. Although many mainline Protestant clergy harshly criticized Israel as warfare continued in the region, the general public favored Israel. Evangelicals gained both numeric and political strength, and their attitudes became the dominant American Protestant voice, especially after the election of Southern Baptist Jimmy Carter as president. Dispensationalist interpretations of current events, seeing opposition to Israel as opposition to God himself, became increasingly popular. The new American political landscape following the rise of the New Right bears little resemblance to that of previous decades. Ecumenism would no longer be the answer to religious conflict. With increasing interest in the plight of Third World populations, including Palestinians, mainline Protestants often censured Israel, leaving American Jews with a sense of betrayal. As a result, looking for new partnerships, American Jews stopped ignoring conservative evangelicals.

Carenen tells a compelling and well-documented story. She has done a service to those who study American attitudes toward Israel and Christian-Jewish relations with this complex narrative. A fuller conclusion in a separate chapter would have helped to flesh out her argument, but its absence does not significantly detract from the book's overall merit. As religious influences on foreign policy in the Middle East continue to be of contemporary relevance, we must look responsibly toward the past in order to understand our current situation. A broad study like this gives us the opportunity to contextualize specific incidents and the experiences of individuals within a multifaceted historical phenomenon, both in the past and today. Carenen already provides the model for doing so with her own case studies. The book will be a welcome resource for researchers as well as for classrooms.

April C. Armstrong's current project, tentatively titled, "That's What Makes Me a Jew and Him a Baptist: Jews, Southern Baptists, and the American Public Square in the era of Reagan" focuses on interfaith dialogue between the Anti-Defamation League and the Southern Baptist Convention in the late twentieth century. Armstrong was a 2011–2012 recipient of the Loewenstein-Weiner Fellowship at the American Jewish Archives. She will receive her doctorate in Religion in the Americas from Princeton University at the end of this year.

Michel R. Cohen, *The Birth of Conservative Judaism: Solomon Schechter's Disciples and the Creation of an American Religious Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), ix + 210 pp.

Concern with the past starts with the present. Michael Cohen's fascinating evocation of the origins of American Conservative Judaism proceeds from his understanding that the movement today "stands at a crossroads" and that the alternative directions it might go are rooted in alternative conceptions of its history. As he states in his conclusion:

Will it return to Schechter's Catholic Israel, seeking to unite the American Jewish world behind a message of a traditional Judaism that is relevant in the lives of modern Americans? Or will it heed the call of the rabbis of the 1950s who sought to transform the movement into one with clear boundaries that would distinguish it as a separate "brand"? (163)

Cohen begins with the thesis that the currently regnant understanding of the origins of Conservative Judaism is that it had its origins in the “historical Judaism” of the German rabbi Zacharias Frankel. He ultimately traces this determination to Mordecai Kaplan (149) and its dissemination to two prominent members of the Conservative rabbinate, Mordecai Waxman and Moshe Davis (152–153). These are prominent among “the rabbis of the 1950s who sought to transform the movement into one with clear boundaries that would distinguish it as a separate ‘brand.’”

In doing so, however, these rabbis of the 1950s, according to Cohen, tended to marginalize Solomon Schechter and his remarkable role as head of the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) and founder of the United Synagogue of America. Cohen’s book is dedicated to shedding light on Schechter’s influence on these two institutions crucial to the development of Conservative Judaism. It does so by looking at the lives and careers of the Schechter-trained rabbis and their relationships with their charismatic master.

What Cohen finds is that when Schechter came to the United States in 1902, it was to take charge of a seminary that was designed to train English-speaking traditional rabbis who were essentially unemployable in the vast majority of synagogues that then existed. These synagogues were essentially divided between the Yiddish-speaking Orthodox and the tradition-rejecting Reform. It is no wonder, then, that the rabbis who emanated from JTS in the Schechter years bonded closely with their master and among themselves. Collectively, they constituted a new religious movement in American Jewry, and Cohen applies to their study some of the methodologies used in religious studies to analyze New Religious Movements. Though Cohen does not really sustain this sort of analysis for most of the book, the insight gained by this contextualization is important.

What does Cohen understand about Schechter’s disciples? Most important, they constituted a reasonably diverse group, ranging from rabbis who self-identified as Orthodox and sought the approval of the Orthodox world for their actions and those who felt that the preservation of traditional Judaism in the twentieth century required changes in the presentation as well as the content of that tradition. This is the group of men that founded the United Synagogue of America as well as the Rabbinical Assembly (which grew out of the JTS Alumni Association). In both institutions it was understood that the precarious nature of the relationship between the rabbis and their various congregations required a good deal

of compromise; this was symbolized by the vague language of the requirement for admission to the United Synagogue: to be “essentially loyal to traditional Judaism.” What did the United Synagogue stand for, beyond that platitude? What did the rabbis of the Rabbinical Assembly stand for? No one could say for sure. Some of the rabbis, such as Louis Epstein and Charles Kauvar, seem to have liked this ambiguity. It enabled them to retain their ties and self-identification with Orthodox Judaism. Others, such as Solomon Goldman and Mordecai Kaplan, sought to create a distinctive Conservative Judaism that differentiated itself as a third religious movement—to the “left” of Orthodoxy (which many Conservative rabbis of this era thought was soon going to die a natural death) and to the “right” of Reform—within American Judaism.

By the 1950s, those who sought a distinct Conservative movement got their wish, symbolized by the famous decision of the Rabbinical Assembly’s Committee on Jewish Law and Standards to allow Jews to drive to the synagogue on the Sabbath. In Cohen’s interpretation, this move represented something in the nature of a repudiation of Schechter’s “Catholic Israel” ideal and of the generation of the rabbinical graduates of “Schechter’s Seminary,” whose careers were then mostly coming to an end.

This interpretation, as Cohen develops it, is quite plausible and illuminating. However, it is also possible to understand the breakup of the often tense coalition of staunch traditionalists and moderate reformers that made up Conservative Judaism at midcentury in different ways. For instance, it could be argued that Conservative synagogues barely existed anywhere in North America when Schechter began his mission in the United States, and therefore the JTS rabbis could hardly afford to read anyone out of their movement. By 1950, however, the suburban expansion of American Judaism was making Conservative Judaism the denomination of choice for hundreds of new congregations led by the children of the immigrant wave. Conservative rabbis could make their brand of Judaism distinct in the 1950s in a way they could not in the 1920s, because the new religious situation of American Jewry and the existence of hundreds of compatible congregations allowed them to do so.

In any event, the Conservative rabbis of the 1950s sought a usable past and found it in Zacharias Frankel. Accepting this usable past meant—perhaps inevitably, under the circumstances—that Schechter’s ideals and teachings became less important to the movement.

Cohen is to be congratulated for having the vision and perspicacity to have described the world of Schechter and his rabbinic disciples in all its complexity and uncertainty, and to have been able to offer the troubled contemporary Conservative movement an important and interesting alternative past (and future) to contemplate.

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Daniel Katz, *All Together Different: Yiddish Socialists, Garment Workers, and the Labor Roots of Multiculturalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 298 pp.

Can one write a book whose main argument centers on Yiddish socialists, their ideology, and their ethnic identity without using any Yiddish-language sources? That is one of the shortcomings that mars Daniel Katz's study of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU). Katz argues that early-twentieth-century Jewish socialists and labor organizers devised "a different model of unionism," which "encouraged workers to explore and express their distinct ethnic and racial identities within the context of a militant union movement." According to Katz, this model of labor unionism, inspired by the ideas of "Yiddish socialism," laid the roots of multiculturalism in the United States by developing what he calls "mutual culturalism:" a respect for various ethnic cultures "and a willingness to tolerate the practice of those cultural forms in society and its institutions" (viii, 4–6).

The book is divided into three parts. The first part outlines the ideological background of late-nineteenth-century Russian Jewish radicals, its role in the formation of the Jewish labor movement in New York City, and the internal warfare between the communists and their socialist opponents that considerably weakened the ILGWU in the 1920s. The second (and best) part focuses on the ILGWU's host of educational programs, particularly in the Dressmakers' Local 22, during the union's heyday years of 1933–1937. As more and more non-Jewish workers, mostly African American and Puerto Rican unskilled and semi-skilled women, joined the local, it sponsored lectures, classes, choirs, concerts, orchestras, dance nights, children's summer camps, and athletic activities (such as the union's women's basketball league). Those programs offered not only opportunities for intimate social

intermingling among Jewish, Italian, Puerto Rican, and African American workers, but also encouraged each group to promote ethnic pride in its own culture. African American workers in Harlem could take a class about “The Negro in American History” (130), and Puerto Rican workers attended Spanish-language entertainment events in East Harlem (157). Katz emphasizes the role and influence of radical women—such as the ILGWU’s vice president and director of the educational department, Fannia Cohn, who planned and implemented many educational and cultural programs—and the ensuing “gendered contest over power” (71).

The third part of the book deals mainly with the union’s highly successful stage production, *Pins and Needles*, which opened on Broadway in November 1937. Katz uses the show’s watered-down social message to demonstrate how the ILGWU’s Jewish leadership, headed by David Dubinsky, sought to move to the mainstream of American political life as active players in Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal coalition. Katz laments that in the process, “The voices of Jewish immigrants, African Americans, Hispanics, and women were muted” (230) as a unique model of unionism was abandoned.

Katz is not only a historian but also a former union organizer, and his empathy and enthusiasm for the cause of labor and interracial cooperation are evident in almost every page of his book. The book is at its best when Katz delineates the union’s educational initiatives and analyzes the clashes between union leaders, such as Dubinsky and Cohn: Though he also had an accent, “Dubinsky was embarrassed by Cohn’s thick Yiddish accent” and passed her over when nominating (1935) a non-Jewish native English speaker as the union’s educational director (187–188).

Still, that very enthusiasm makes Katz’s study uncritical at times, if not altogether celebratory, when dealing with interethnic relations within the ILGWU. Concentrating on materials relating to educational programs (such as the educational department’s bulletins and reports) often presents the union as it aspired to be rather than reflecting the enduring reality of intergroup conflict and competition. Abundant Yiddish-language sources illustrate how Jewish union members—including socialists—felt and behaved toward their non-Jewish coworkers (mostly Italians, but also toward African Americans, Poles, and members of other groups); these sources rebut Katz’s upbeat description, but he has not tapped into that rich literature. Furthermore, many English-language sources could have been consulted—most

notably, a study by Irving R. Stuart, who interviewed dozens of ILGWU Jewish and non-Jewish workers and organizers in the 1940s (especially in Local 22, which Katz has focused on). Stuart found out that Jewish workers—mostly women—believed many of their coworkers were antisemitic and treated the Italians (and, later, African Americans and Puerto Ricans) as interlopers who destroyed the union that Jews sacrificed so much to build.¹

The manuscript contains small technical mistakes (e.g., a meddler or busybody is *kokhlefl* in Yiddish, not *coch leffen*, 185), yet the bigger problem is conceptual: Katz has misread the term “Yiddishism,” when he argues that Jewish radicals who came to New York in the 1880s and 1890s “founded mutually supporting institutions on Yiddishist principles” (15). Those radicals, however, were largely internationalists who eschewed Jewish identity, viewing it as “false consciousness:” they saw Yiddish as an uncouth “*zbar-gon*” (jargon), to be used (if at all) for organizing workers only as a transitional phase. Another example of a conceptual error lies in Katz’s argument that ILGWU leaders’ support for the U.S. entry into World War II meant “to reinvent their ideological heritage” and an “abandonment of a Jewish socialist vision,” since most Jewish socialists opposed the U.S. entry into World War I (228–229). That “abandonment” is conveyed, among other things, by a quote from socialist August Claessens, who was not even Jewish. But more important questions remain. Was the support for the war against Nazism an “abandonment of a Jewish socialist vision”? Was the concern for the very existence of Jewish communities abroad opposed to Yiddish socialism? Did the Jewish Labor Committee, the most important body of Jewish labor in the 1930s (to which Katz dedicates one paragraph), with its anti-Nazi campaigns, fail to understand the values of Yiddish socialism?

Katz’s study makes a contribution to the fields of labor and women’s history and discusses a very significant moment in the history of the Jewish labor movement: the transition from Yiddish socialism to Jewish liberalism, and the way it affected the relations between Jews and various ethnic groups and corresponded to larger changes in American society. At the same time, unfortunately, historical inaccuracies, misconceptions, and an idealistic portrayal of Jewish socialists undercut the book’s achievements.

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Note

¹Irving R. Stuart, “A Study of Factors Associated with Inter-Group Conflict in the Ladies’ Garment Industry in New York City,” doctoral dissertation, New York University, 1951, 173, 189, 193–194.

Mira Katzburg-Yungman, *Hadassah: American Women Zionists and the Rebirth of Israel*, trans. Tammy Berkowitz (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012), 400 pp.

Scholars and students of Jewish history will find *Hadassah: American Women Zionists and the Rebirth of Israel* informative, insightful, and useful. Bringing fresh analysis together with historical synthesis, Mira Katzburg-Yungman’s work testifies to Hadassah’s integral role in the development of the American Jewish community, the State of Israel, and world Zionism. As such, Hadassah’s history is inseparable from those of American Jewry and Israel. The work professes to investigate a single time period (the establishment of the Israeli state), although it is more inclusive in reality, spanning the twentieth century. Katzburg-Yungman traces Hadassah’s shifting ideologies and activities in both America and abroad over time, and it is primarily from its practical doings that she identifies and articulates the group’s ideological convictions. Hadassah’s principal objective has always been to “ensure Jewish survival, both physical and spiritual,” and it has been equally committed to its existence as a popular, accessible organization for the masses (75). A corrective to the lack of comprehensive work on Hadassah, Katzburg-Yungman’s book constitutes a crucial historiographical contribution—a study of Hadassah “as a whole” in the United States, the Yishuv, and Israel (4).

Hadassah highlights a number of key principles related to the organization and its various commitments. First, Hadassah’s female character has been at the heart of its goals as well as its successes. Hadassah has self-identified as a Jewish and a Zionist organization most emphatically, but its identity as a women’s organization has powerfully influenced its history. Specifically, gender expectations about socially acceptable avenues for women’s activism guided Hadassah toward its concentrations on professional medicine and personal care. Next, as Katzburg-Yungman illustrates, Hadassah has eluded geographic containment even while location remained crucial to its activities and impact. As an American organization,

Hadassah reflects unique American Jewish traditions of philanthropy, volunteerism, and civic engagement, yet its most critical and lasting effects have manifested beyond United States' borders. Indeed, "Hadassah's activities in the Yishuv and in Israel have been, and remain today, the pillar that supports the organization in the United States" (274). It is noteworthy that Hadassah was especially key in the development of modern medicine in the Yishuv and Israel. Lastly, Hadassah has benefitted, in strength and in numbers, from its apolitical character.

Katzburg-Yungman describes Hadassah's presence in Israel as multifaceted in nature, but the analysis rightly stresses Hadassah's own emphasis on medical services and professionalism. Extending its hand into hospital building, nurse training, medical schools, family clinics, paramedical professionalization, public health, and youth groups, Hadassah exerted substantial and enduring influence on medical training and practice in Israel. In these arenas, as in nearly all its endeavors, the complementary principles of "pioneering" and "devolution" guided Hadassah's policies and decision making. Its leaders and members worked to import and initiate "model" programs to the Yishuv and Israel and to gradually transfer or "devolve" services from pioneers to local populations over time (97). This pattern—indicative of both Hadassah's concentration on local people's needs and its unique, subtle brand of paternalism—was at the heart of Hadassah's work during the mid-twentieth century.

As a monograph, *Hadassah* exemplifies scholarly organization and clarity. Katzburg-Yungman's five-part structure, divided partially chronologically and partially thematically, works well and reflects one of the book's key aims—to examine Hadassah from multiple perspectives. Each part is further subdivided by chapters and directive subheadings, and any given section, chapter, or part might well function on its own as a topical or thematic piece yet still fits within the book as a whole. Part One offers a broad overview of Hadassah from its founding through 1947. Emphasizing the challenges both World Wars posed to Zionism and Hadassah, the opening chapters serve as a functional prequel for the analysis that follows. Part Two covers Hadassah in the American sphere, Part Three expands to think about Hadassah in light of global Zionism, and Part Four turns to Hadassah's involvement in Israel from 1948–1956. Part Five considers Hadassah in the broader contexts of Zionist, Jewish, and women's groups and uses a comparative thematic

approach to draw meaningful conclusions about the history and legacy of Hadassah.

Hadassah's systematic and sensible organization undoubtedly contributes to its overall approachability and usefulness. As a crucial addition to the historiography, it will be widely cited in related ongoing and future research. As a reference work, *Hadassah* offers comprehensive and descriptive narrative analysis. Last, and perhaps most important, it is difficult to read this volume without envisioning it in the classroom; the volume should be employed as a valuable teaching tool for its content and methodology. Overall, English readers will welcome *Hadassah's* translation from Hebrew, not only for its readability and many applications, but also for its critical analysis of an organization so central to global Jewish History.

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Joshua Eli Plaut, *A Kosher Christmas: 'Tis the Season to Be Jewish* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 232 pp.

Joshua Eli Plaut's *A Kosher Christmas: 'Tis the Season to Be Jewish* is the first book-length scholarly treatment of American Jewish interactions with Christmas. Plaut opens by arguing that Christmas, as an omnipresent celebration in which Jews cannot fully participate, provides an annual opportunity to "rethink, redefine, and negotiate" what it means to be a Jew in America. "Befitting their status as one of America's most successful groups," Plaut argues, "Jews have reshaped Christmas and challenged society to broaden the December season to recognize festivities sponsored by secular and minority groups" (6). After providing an overview of European Jewish responses to Christmas, Plaut delves into the many ways that American Jews have responded to the holiday. He examines their contributions to "secularizing" the American holiday, thereby making it more accessible to non-Christian Americans. He documents American Jewish alternatives to Christmas and Jewish Yuletide volunteerism. Last, Plaut recounts how some American Jews, intermarried or not, have chosen to celebrate Christmas. Through all of

these topics, he demonstrates the range of ways Jews have confronted the power of Christmas in American culture.

In documenting the range of American Jewish responses to Christmas, Plaut marshals a stunning array of material that will be very useful not only to scholars who build on his research, but also those interested in the related topics of interfaith dialogue and the American Jewish fashioning of Hanukkah. His research demonstrates that Jews have played important roles in shaping the traditions of contemporary American Christmas. Citing familiar examples such as Irving Berlin and “White Christmas,” as well as lesser-known instances such as Johnny Marks and “Rocking Around the Christmas Tree,” Plaut shows how Jewish musicians connected the holiday to themes of nostalgia and overcoming hardship, making Christmas both more secular and more universal.

Not only does Plaut trace how American Jews helped shape Christmas, he gives detailed attention to how they responded to it, demonstrating a broad array of tactics for creating alternate traditions for the minority culture. In doing so, Plaut offers a cultural history with a normative edge; indeed, he attributes the rise in prominence of holidays such as Hanukkah not to assimilation (or Jewish declension), as has been commonly argued, but rather as a survival strategy to offer a distinctly Jewish way to participate in the December festivities so important to American culture. Additionally, he points to what are, in essence, “Jewish Christmas” traditions. Jews, he points out, have found individual and communal ways to make use of December vacation time, ranging from vacationing at Catskill resorts over the New Year to attending comedy clubs where Christmas parody creates its own genre of entertainment. He documents aspects of American Jewish culture previously overlooked by scholars, discussing traditions such as Chinese food on Christmas day. Last, Plaut turns a dispassionate eye toward the question of Christmas and the interfaith family, exploring how and why families choose to celebrate Christmas, often despite having chosen to raise children as Jews. He draws careful distinctions between Chrismukkah—a fusion of Christmas and Hanukkah—and celebrating both holidays. He argues that the secular cast that interfaith families give the holidays is central to their ability to celebrate them side by side as part of a festive season without cognitive dissonance. Plaut touches on Jewish participation in Christmas celebrations outside of interfaith family life. In doing

so, he cites varied examples such as his own childhood memories as a Jewish child visiting Santa Claus, to the presence of Christmas trees in the homes of his fellow Jewish congregants, to early twentieth-century debates about whether Jews should celebrate Christmas. He does not, however, delve into the experiences of Jews who celebrated Christmas in their homes. The absence of an analysis of Christmas celebrations in the lives of acculturated Jews is a lacuna in Plaut's work.

Plaut arranges his material thematically, and that decision shapes his narrative in both positive and negative ways. While it allows the reader to easily focus on particular aspects of the Jewish experience of the holiday—for example, volunteerism or parody and popular culture—it also blunts the critical edge of the work, limiting the connections that Plaut can make between the various Jewish responses to Christmas and preventing him from better framing his work in specific historical contexts. Indeed, the book flattens out distinctions between different moments in the past century of American Jewish history and does not offer a clear sense of change over time. A chronological account would have provided Plaut more scope to consider intersections between his themes—for instance, allowing him to explore whether the secularization of Christmas coincided with the rise of Hanukkah to create a pan-American holiday season. Plaut does not ask or answer essential questions such as: Have American Jewish responses to Christmas changed over the course of the twentieth century? If so, why? Plaut includes much of the material he would need to answer the question but tends to catalog rather than analyze. Ultimately, the book's contribution lies in the material gathered for the project rather than in the exploration of the larger implications suggested by that material. Still, *A Kosher Christmas* is a welcome addition to the literature in what remains an understudied area of the American Jewish experience.

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Bruce Ruben, *Max Lilienthal: The Making of the American Rabbinate* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011), 324 pp.

Bruce Ruben's engaging biography illuminates the life of Max Lilienthal and, at the same time, teaches readers a good deal about the American rabbinate's crisis of leadership during the nineteenth century. Lilienthal came to the United States with a rabbinic degree in 1845, served three congregations in New York City, and wanted to establish a *beit din* (religious court) in the hope of resolving the many disputes that arose in congregations and religious institutions, as well as among Jews regarding religious matters. But, Ruben explains, facing the "anarchy of a rapidly growing community where lay governance predominated," and with few ordained rabbis to join a court, Lilienthal gave up the idea. Within a few years he relocated to Cincinnati, where his cordial and understated diplomatic style won over many supporters to the effort to establish the liberal Jewish institutions that both he and Isaac M. Wise had undertaken.

This much we knew.

However, Ruben's mastery of Hebrew, German, Yiddish, and English sources allows him to reveal the personal odyssey that took Lilienthal from traditional Jewish practice to liberal reform. He also shows the ways in which Lilienthal's public rabbinic leadership resolved many private religious issues. Like many Jewish immigrants before and since, Lilienthal embraced the values of American civil religion. But, explains Ruben, in his case, "American civil religion ... serve[ed] as a bridge between his *maskilic* (Jewish enlightenment) values and American values" (229). Rabbinic training, enlightenment values, and American civic values alike underscored for Lilienthal the importance of public duty and the promotion of education, ideals that he had also learned through German notions about *bildung*. Ruben so clearly and persuasively paints his portrait of Lilienthal that it comes as no surprise to learn that, throughout his life, Lilienthal founded and led educational institutions quite apart from his rabbinic duties. The young man from Munich, who journeyed to Riga to head a liberal Jewish school, became, years later, a religious and civic leader who joined a group of local Ohioans—non-Jews and Jews—to found the University of Cincinnati.

Ruben's portrayal of Lilienthal is deft and significant, but his insistence that Lilienthal "created a model for a post-emancipation rabbinate"

(236) is unconvincing. The more obvious choice as exemplar is Isaac Leeser (d. 1868), fourteen years Lilienthal's senior. Leeser was an earlier model of a congregational leader; he established Jewish institutions—charitable, social, and, especially, educational—joined non-Jewish leaders to support public educational institutions, grappled with lay congregational leaders, and became a beloved figure. Ruben refers to Leeser, but he does not explain why Leeser does not qualify to be considered the model for the American rabbinate. Perhaps, this reader wonders, it is because Leeser never obtained rabbinic ordination and never claimed to be a rabbi. He used the title *hazzan* (prayer reader) or reverend. Yet, in the freewheeling world of nineteenth-century American Judaism, when few ordained rabbis could be found, no one filled and defined the function of Jewish congregational and religious communal leader better than Leeser. Perhaps, too, that lack of ordination is why Ruben credits Lilienthal with establishing the American rabbinic model instead of his more famous colleague, Wise. On that account, Lilienthal's ordained rabbinic peer, Sabato Morais (d. 1897), who spearheaded the founding of the Jewish Theological Seminary, might equally be seen as one who helped to define what the American rabbinate would look like. Like Lilienthal, Morais was a peacemaker in a time too filled with ideologues. Ruben's view is too narrowly focused on Lilienthal to make a convincing argument about his unique place in the history of the American rabbinate.

Nonetheless, this book is a valuable, insightful, and lucid portrayal of an important figure in American Jewish history. It is a thoughtful and rewarding account that places Lilienthal in the broad context of his world.

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Joseph M. Siry, *Beth Sholom Synagogue: Frank Lloyd Wright and Modern Religious Architecture* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), xxvi + 705 pp.

This is a magnificent study of the twentieth century's most audacious American synagogue, and related churches, designed by the titan Frank Lloyd Wright. Forming its own scholarly edifice of description, documentation, and elucidation, Siry's book will become an indispensable reference for Wright specialists and other students of American, modern, and ecclesiastical architecture. Jewish and gentile architects will also be intrigued by the book's staggering breadth and depth.

Siry, a leading interpreter of Wright (1867–1959), places Beth Sholom, built in suburban Philadelphia in 1959, within a broad context. His first chapter focuses on Wright's Unitarian upbringing in Wisconsin and Chicago's three Reform synagogues designed between 1885 and 1892 by Adler & Sullivan, Wright's early employers. After a look at two unbuilt projects in California and New York and Wright's radical critique of theatre buildings, Siry turns to a comparison of four of Wright's churches: a gigantic offshoot of St. Mark's in-the-Bowery, New York City, designed in 1926; Pfeiffer Memorial Chapel at Florida Southern College, Lakeland, built in 1941; Christian Community Church, Kansas City, Missouri, built in 1942; and the meetinghouse of the Unitarian Society of Madison, Wisconsin, built in 1951. (A fuller analysis of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, Milwaukee, built in 1961, would have been welcome.)

The author's scholarly resourcefulness is revealed through a comprehensive bibliography and 150 pages of endnotes. In the case of Beth Sholom, these endnotes show a commanding knowledge of the synagogue's archives, the papers of Rabbi Mortimer Cohen at the Jewish Theological Seminary, Philadelphia's Jewish and general press, the national Jewish press, and many studies of American Jewish history.

Beth Sholom is further enriched by nearly three hundred black-and-white images, which include photos, drawings, and plans of Wright's buildings and highlights of his correspondence. Regrettably, there are only ten color photos, half showing Beth Sholom.

Although Unity Temple—the 1908 structure that was the subject of Siry's definitive study, published in 1996—was pivotal in Wright's

iconoclastic career, most of his religious commissions enabled him to work with visionary clergy and seek essential religious and architectural meanings. The house of worship most closely related to Beth Sholom was the St. Mark's project, an unbuilt design that was intended to celebrate the universality of religious yearning and seat 100,000 worshippers. This "Steel Cathedral" would have become the world's tallest structure.

Wright's three drawings of St. Mark's were unknown to Cohen (1894–1972), who had led Beth Sholom since 1920, a year before its large but conventional synagogue was built in Logan, a new Jewish neighborhood north of downtown. In November 1953, following a recommendation by the Jewish sculptor Boris Blai, Cohen approached Wright, who was 86 years old at the time (but claimed to be a few years younger).

Siry emphasizes Cohen's and Wright's vision of building an "American" synagogue, which, they imagined, would become the nation's—if not all of Judaism's—premier example. The architect and client, both native-born, credited each other with conceiving "The Synagogue of the Future" to honor Philadelphia as a cradle of American liberty, the American Jewish Tercentenary, and Judaism as the fountainhead of Christianity and Islam.

Cohen was able to fire Wright's imagination by sending a few of his own sketches and by providing a synagogue tutorial consisting of letters, visits, photos, articles, and books. Indeed, Cohen was responsible for suggesting the building's key image and metaphor, a glowing embodiment of Mount Sinai. But Wright's design, forming a tetrahedral dome, is so fertile that it evokes myriad interpretations: a desert tabernacle, a three-sided menorah, a fortress, a ship, an iceberg, a jewel or even, at its base, the hands of God. Yet, there is nothing inherently American about this design—other than its resemblance to an almighty tepee. As with all of Wright's best designs, it is an example of what he called "organic" architecture, where decoration, materials, technology, form, space, and function are inseparable.

Siry does not adequately explain the rabbi's infatuation with his architect and his compulsion to erect a Jewish cathedral rivaling St. Peter's in Rome. Perhaps by 1953, though he had achieved every measure of professional success, Cohen was worried about his legacy. He must have known that the employment of a world-famous architect would be a marketing bonanza and that his design would affirm Beth Sholom's identity.

Because Beth Sholom had built some facilities, including a religious school, chapel, and social hall, on the Elkins Park site in 1952, Wright was liberated to concentrate on two sanctuaries: the major assembly hall above ground and a chapel, funded by sisterhood, below. The larger sanctuary—astonishing in every sense—not only reinforces the dynamics of Jewish prayer but strikes an ecumenical, spiritual chord.

By celebrating the architect's extraordinary powers, however, Siry sidesteps the issue of Wright's shortcomings. These included: the abandonment of his father; the betrayal of his mentors, Adler & Sullivan; the abandonment of his wife and children for a married woman; unreasonable demands on clients; disdain for American and European colleagues (despite some willingness to pilfer their ideas); and disregard for former protégés and apprentices. Since the mid-1930s, Wright had become the high priest of his own cult, the Taliesin Fellowship, whose magical kingdoms in Wisconsin and Arizona bewitched guests and residents alike. In his life and work, Wright proudly brandished his maternal ancestors' motto, "Truth Against the World."

A looming question, which Siry does not answer, is whether Wright, despite his professional marriage with Cohen and work for many other Jewish clients, was an antisemite or merely a nasty man. The architect's autobiography mocked Adler & Sullivan's Jewish clientele and its many Jewish assistants; it also characterized one of his most farsighted and indulgent clients, Edgar Kaufmann Sr., the patron of Fallingwater and many other projects, as a cheapskate. During the 1940s, Wright sought favor with the American Council for Judaism, an anti-Zionist organization led by Reform rabbis based in Philadelphia; and, Siry acknowledges parenthetically, he repelled his former friend (and Cohen's colleague), Max Kadushin, the Hillel rabbi in Madison, by showing some Nazi sympathy. Somehow, Cohen and his congregants were able to overlook several of Wright's outrageous remarks made in their presence. These related to the inauthenticity of synagogue architecture, Judaism's unfulfilled destiny, and the need for Americans to overcome their piddling religious differences.

Despite his vast erudition, Siry may be faulted for sidestepping another fundamental question: Just how significant is Wright's Beth Sholom? The book's title is ambiguous. Clearly, Beth Sholom is as accomplished as any of the churches examined in this volume, but is it

equivalent to his first and much smaller house of worship, Unity Temple in Oak Park? Why or why not? In his cogent introduction, Siry asks whether Wright's synagogue is "wondrous" or "bizarre." Clearly, it is, and will forever be, both. Such is the mystery of a masterwork and an immensely complicated person.

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Sonja Schoepf Wentling and Rafael Medoff, *Herbert Hoover and the Jews: The Origins of the "Jewish Vote" and Bipartisan Support for Israel* (Washington, DC: The David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies, 2012), 225 pp.

For at least three generations during the twentieth century, the American Jewish equation of Jews' being automatic supporters of the Democratic party was an almost unchallenged belief. This stemmed from the days of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, considered by many Jews to be their savior during the Great Depression, and continued when the Democratic party was equated with liberalism and minority protection, both of which Jews saw as necessary for their own security and prosperity in the United States.

However, Sonja Schoepf Wentling and Rafael Medoff remind us of a different and largely forgotten era, when it was the Republican activist and later President Herbert Hoover who actually assisted and supported Jewish causes from World War I onward. As they point out in their conclusions, Hoover never had more than a handful of Jewish associates, nor was he particularly familiar with Judaism or Jewish affairs. Yet his post-World War I campaign to feed the destitute masses of war-torn Europe saved many Jews from starvation; and after the war years, he continued to make and forge ties with a small group of influential Jews based primarily on common humanitarian interests.

Consequently, during the Holocaust years the authors show us how Hoover repeatedly spoke out for the Jews while Roosevelt—long hailed in the collective Jewish memory as a "savior"—repeatedly turned away from rescue endeavors. Before the war, Hoover spoke out for the admission of German-Jewish refugees to the United States and urged opening

the doors to Jewish refugee children; and during the war years, he lent his name to the Bergson Group's attempt to publicize the plight of European Jewry and signed newspaper advertisements urging rescue at a time when Roosevelt claimed rescue was impossible. Nevertheless, as a Roosevelt opponent, Hoover was often ostracized by mainstream Jewish leaders, and Jewish voters still felt uncomfortable voting for the Republican party.

Zionism was another issue that Hoover endorsed. As president he adopted this position and never wavered from it throughout his life, despite strong anti-Zionist and antisemitic pressure from his own state department. His support of the Zionist platform and that of other Republicans involved in the Palestine plank discussions in 1944 at the Republican convention acted as the beginning of bipartisan support for Zionism and later for Israel, a fixture of American politics ever since.

Nevertheless, as the authors point out throughout their fascinating and well-documented book, throughout this period and for many decades afterward it was the Democratic Party that received the Jewish vote, as this was the party perceived as supporting ethnic inclusion and labor rights, both of paramount importance to American Jewry. Indeed, both authors emphasize that the bipartisan support for Zionism was not only a jockeying for votes but also based on moral values that the policymakers shared. Thus, Zionism in America benefited from what they called "a fortunate combination of humanitarian appeal, shared core values, election-year political opportunity, and creative lobbying by its advocates."

Most important, this book reminds us about the pro-Jewish and pro-Zionist activities of an important, almost-forgotten American political figure—Herbert Hoover—and reminds us also that not only the Democratic candidates—American Jewry's historic and traditional choice—can be "good for the Jews."

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Victoria Saker Woeste, *Henry Ford's War on Jews and the Legal Battle Against Hate Speech* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), xvi + 408 pp.

In the 1920s the auto magnate, Henry Ford, bought a small newspaper with one purpose in mind: to spread his hatred of the Jews. He distributed the American edition of the infamous forgery, “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion,” and his own rant, “The International Jew.” One man, Aaron Sapiro, dared to take Ford on, and did so at the cost of his professional reputation, practice, and financial resources. In his fight, which today we applaud, he got no help from the leaders of the American Jewish establishment, especially the head of the American Jewish Committee, Louis Marshall. Victoria Saker Woeste’s study of the events, and the roles played by Marshall, Sapiro, and Ford and his minions, as well as the legal developments involved, is the best account to date. Its impressive and exhaustive research, as well as its clear writing, will in all likelihood make it the definitive work for years to come.

Ford’s antisemitism is well known, and even admiring biographers have found it difficult to explain away. The man who set America on the path to modern technology never lost his sense of being a farm boy, and even though he did more than anyone to destroy the type of rural community in which he had grown up, he blamed these changes on Jews in general and Jewish bankers in particular. Although many of his contemporaries—such as Thomas Edison—also disliked Jews, none carried their Jew hatred as far as the Flivver King.

Sapiro was a young, idealistic lawyer who spearheaded the farmers’ cooperative movement in the United States and thus earned Ford’s wrath. Instead of recognizing that cooperatives gave growers greater bargaining power and profits, Ford claimed that it was a Jewish plot to increase the profits of the middle agents and bankers while impoverishing the farmers. He launched a series of articles in the *Dearborn Independent* attacking Sapiro as the Jew responsible for the plight of American farmers.

Sapiro, a proud man, fought back, and by all the rules of libel should have won. The *Independent* articles were full of inaccuracies and had the case gone to a jury, even in Detroit, a fair-minded jury should have found for him. But Sapiro made one mistake—he also claimed that Ford had libeled him and all other Jews by his articles, and as Woeste shows, the

notion of group libel was to some extent a stranger to American law. Even so, the two issues—the libel against Sapiro as an individual and the group libel against the Jews—could have been separated.

Ford used his money to hire an army of investigators to examine the jury panel, Sapiro's business dealings, and a host of other extraneous matters. He hired one of the best trial lawyers of the day, Senator James A. Reed, who in the course of several grueling days of cross-examination completely failed to trip up Sapiro and resorted to cheap displays of antisemitism by mispronouncing his name and trying to ridicule him. The highlight of the trial was supposed to be Ford's appearance on the witness stand, but his lawyers managed to get one delay after another until some casual remarks by one of the jurors led to a mistrial. Sapiro vowed to go on, but at this point Ford, beset by business problems (the public had grown weary of the Model T and wanted something jazzier) and tired of the bad publicity, called in Marshall.

There is no doubt that Marshall did good, perhaps even great, things for the American Jewish community, and the list of accomplishments of the American Jewish Committee, which he helped to found and which he led for many years, is not to be dismissed. However, when historians run across Marshall in relation to events in his life, such as Woeste does here, the man whom some called a saint comes across as anything but. (In terms of truth in advertising, I will admit that in my work on Louis Brandeis, Stephen Wise, and American Zionism I also found Marshall to be less than admirable.)

Marshall had no interest in helping Sapiro or Herman Bernstein, a reputable Jewish journalist who also sued Ford for libel. Like the other German Jews of his generation, Marshall believed that the airing of Jewish problems was a mistake. (Stephen Wise characterized them as the "sh-sh Jews.") He preferred to ignore antisemitism when he could, confident that this ancient virus would eventually die in the free atmosphere of the United States. Aside from a few close colleagues on the committee, Marshall acted alone and resented it whenever anyone suggested that perhaps he should confer with others or discuss matters with people who were knowledgeable about local affairs. Within the Jewish community, there were many complaints about "Marshall law." As one journal commented on the "The Reign of Louis M," he acted as "absolute ruler of four million Jews in the United States" in the style of a French king or a Russian tsar.

When Ford approached Marshall, the lawyer took it as his due; after all, he was the head of American Jewry. He crafted a statement that Ford signed, in which, among other conditions, he apologized for his past behavior and said he would destroy copies of “The International Jew.” There was not a word in the apology to either Sapiro or Bernstein, although both men eventually settled with Ford for minimal amounts. Ford evaded most of the conditions of the apology and had no qualms in 1938 about accepting the Grand Service Cross of the Supreme Order of the German Eagle from the Hitler regime. By then Marshall had died, unaware that the apology he had drafted had done little good.

There is plenty of detail in this book, and in some places perhaps the author could have condensed the tedium of the trial. But she more than compensated for this by her painstaking investigation of what Ford and his lieutenants did, as well as Marshall’s involvement with Ford. She also is thorough in her look at the Massena, New York, blood libel in 1928, for which Marshall often receives praise, although there were others who also played an important role whom Marshall resented as “getting in his way.” Perhaps someday we will be able to praise Marshall’s many accomplishments on behalf of American Jewry, and at the same time, understand the egotism and the harm he occasionally did to American Jewry. Woeste’s book will be a key factor in that understanding.

This is a book that should be in every library of American Judaica. It is a sobering tale of what one wealthy bigot could do, and how a fractured community led by an egotist failed to respond in a meaningful manner.

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