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## BOOK REVIEWS

Dianne Ashton, *Hanukkah in America: A History* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 368 pp.

Dianne Ashton's new book complicates a prevalent opinion about the nature and meaning of Hanukkah in American Jewish life and enriches our scholarly understanding of the links between historical context, individual agency, and religious practice. Contrary to the conventional popular view that Hanukkah's evolution into the commercialized and child-centered holiday we all recognize today unfolded simply as the efforts of American Jews to mimic and compete with the Christmas cultural juggernaut, Ashton argues that American Jews have used Hanukkah celebrations as an opportunity to "insist on their right to be different," as much as to demonstrate the values and practices they share with their Christian neighbors (14). More than just a history of a holiday, this book highlights the particular contributions of rabbis, composers, educators, publishers, and women's groups in reshaping and redefining Hanukkah in response to events, trends, and the needs and desires of ordinary American Jews.

Ashton, a professor of religion at Rowan University, mines extensive archival sources in crafting this rich work of cultural history. Songbooks, sheet music, newspaper editorials, theater scripts, holiday how-to manuals, and the organizational records of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods all assist the author in reconstructing how American Jews have variously interpreted and celebrated Hanukkah since the mid-nineteenth century. Following a discussion of the holiday's ancient Judean origins in the second century BCE and its subsequent development during the rabbinic period, the book follows a chronological progression into the present.

To be sure, Hanukkah's rise to prominence in the American Jewish calendar has had much to do with its temporal proximity to Christmas and the embellishments to the traditional Hanukkah rituals that this so-called "December dilemma" has inspired. As Ashton notes, Hanukkah falls in the midst of an American holiday season that celebrates family, fellowship, joy, and generosity. By giving gifts, exchanging greeting cards, and enjoying Hanukkah pageants and concerts, Jews could feel

at home in America in December, sharing in the spirit of the Christmas season while eschewing Christianity itself.

The urgent need to come to terms with Christmas is not the only explanation for Hanukkah's popularity, however, nor does it sufficiently explain why American Jews have modified and modernized this particular holiday to a greater extent than any other. Unlike those of most other Jewish sacred occasions, Hanukkah's rituals are simple and domestic, designed to be performed at home with family and friends rather than in synagogue under the dominion of rabbis. Accordingly, Ashton argues, individual Jews could redesign, enhance, and introduce Hanukkah customs as they desired, and they often did so in a conscious effort to create fun and memorable experiences for children. The book documents the development of festive communal Hanukkah celebrations, implemented by women and publicized in the Jewish press, as purposeful attempts to instill ethnic pride and emotional security in young American Jews.

Furthermore, like Passover, Hanukkah has offered generations of American Jews the story of "an ancient conflict that could be retold in ways that highlighted [their] own dilemmas" (12). Ashton's book demonstrates how Hanukkah's morality tale of religious freedom fighters who withstood tyranny in a campaign to curb the tide of assimilation has provided a useful rhetorical tool in service of various agendas. In the mid-nineteenth century, both religious reformers and traditionalists claimed the mantle of the Maccabees as they debated the merits of innovations and adaptations in synagogue liturgy and ritual. During World War II and the Cold War, rabbis and editorialists linked the Maccabean cause to contemporaneous struggles against totalitarian regimes, invoking a tradition of Jewish participation in battles to preserve democratic values. In the 1980s, the Lubavitcher Rebbe urged his followers to look to the Maccabees for inspiration in their quest to encourage their fellow Jews to rededicate themselves to Judaism. Whereas the rabbis of the Talmud marginalized the Maccabees and their military victory in framing Hanukkah as evidence of divine providence, American Jews returned to their Hasmonean predecessors to legitimize their ideological projects and reassure themselves about their place in American society.

Other scholars, such as Jenna Weissman Joselit and Joshua Eli Plaut, have previously explored Hanukkah's American transformation into a

major winter holiday, and the arguments at the core of the book will be familiar to readers of Jonathan Sarna and Marshall Sklare. What make Ashton's full-length treatment of Hanukkah stand out are the rich treasure trove of sources she brings to light and the breadth of the study, which tracks the holiday's development from ancient times into the twenty-first century. The several sections devoted to music, both composed and performed in honor of the Festival of Lights, are particularly fresh and compelling, and the book shines a useful spotlight on Hanukkah's central place in American Jewish childhood and education.

The book's chronological structure presents both benefits and disadvantages. Ashton does well to consider the impact of specific events and eras, such as the period of mass Eastern European immigration and World War II, on the ways in which American Jews drew meaning and merry out of their winter celebrations. At the same time, this framework renders some sections of the book repetitive, as Ashton sometimes returns to familiar themes and types of sources across time periods. Additionally, the final chapter on Jewish counterculture and Hasidism is noticeably lighter on actual Hanukkah content than its predecessors are.

Finally, it is a case of both perfect and unfortunate timing that Ashton's book was published a month before the cultural convergence of Hanukkah and Thanksgiving took America by storm in November 2013. *Hanukkah in America* provides useful insights to help explain why Thanksgiving was such a significant event, but it is regrettably unable to reflect on it directly. Nevertheless, this book is certainly a welcome and valuable contribution to the fields of American Jewish history and religious studies.

*Joshua Furman is a doctoral candidate in modern Jewish history at the University of Maryland, College Park, completing a dissertation about American Jewish approaches to education and child-rearing after World War II. During the 2012–2013 academic year, he was a Bernard and Audre Rapoport Fellow at the American Jewish Archives and a Dr. Sophie Bookhalter Graduate Research Fellow at the Center for Jewish History in New York.*

Marc Cohen, *Overweight Sensation: The Life and Comedy of Allan Sherman* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2013), 320 pp. + illus.

In a time of Comedy Central, Seth McFarland, Stephen Colbert, Jon Stewart, *Book of Mormon*, and *Modern Family* it is difficult to imagine the uniqueness, impact, and popularity of Allan Sherman, the then-cutting-edge comedian, social commentator, composer, lyricist, and performer. Marc Cohen's book, *Overweight Sensation: The Life and Comedy of Allan Sherman*, does a magnificent job of returning us to those much simpler days, when Vaughn Meader's best-selling album *The First Family* could affect American politics by lovingly satirizing the Kennedy administration; or Harvard Professor Tom Lehrer could poke fun at everything from NASA to Nazis to New Math in his musical albums; or American attitudes could be swayed by shows such as *That Was the Week that Was* or *The Smothers Brothers' Comedy Hour*, replete with monologues and political diatribes.

Sherman added one unique and profoundly overt perspective to the great comedic voices of his day: his Judaism. Compared to their census numbers, Jews were vastly overrepresented in the comedy fields of radio, television, and film. Radio in the 1930s and 1940s featured Jack Benny, George Burns, Al Jolson, and Mel Allan—all Jews, but except for Jewish attributes or stereotyped humor, none made jokes expressly about their ethnic, cultural, or religious heritage or beliefs. Writing for Sid Caesar's *Your Show of Shows* in the 1950s, Mel Brooks, Carl Reiner, Neil Simon, and Larry Gelbart, among others, presented "Jewish-esque" humor, focusing on the New York or immigrant experience rather than the specifically Jewish one. In *Overweight Sensation*, Cohen quotes a 1959 article in *Time* magazine, which notes that political and social commentary humorists Lenny Bruce, Mort Sahl, and Shelly Berman "joked about father and Freud, about mother and masochism, about sister and sadism." But not Judaism!

Sherman was different. He took American popular, Broadway, or folk music and gave it witty, almost William S. Gilbert-style humor, accessible and popular yet all drawn from his Jewish or autobiographic experiences. "Frère Jacques" becomes "Sarah Jackman" and "Matilda" morphs into "My Zelda," with probably his cleverest lyric coming from his version of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," about garment worker Harry Lewis, who was killed in a fire.

“Oh Harry Lewis perished  
In the service of his lord  
He was trampling through the warehouse  
Where the drapes of Roth are stored.”

Witty, all-American, yet culturally honest and inclusive, Sherman was able to take his history and ethnicity and make it everyone's, Jewish or not.

Cohen creates a personal frame for Sherman's writing. Sherman's life was an unhappy one, being overweight, socially isolated, and insecure. He was born in Chicago to a large family of Orthodox Jews who made their livings in the business and music arenas. According to Cohen, “It was a kooky Jewish paradise rich in family attention and love that Sherman never forgot and always longed for. It did not last long” (21). Soon after, the family left Chicago for California where, in two years' time, Allan's parents divorced, forcing him to choose which parent he would live with. This experience informed his world view, characterized by the simplicity of a child, as in one of his master works, “Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh,” about a boy “exiled” to summer camp.

One cannot understand Sherman's humor without reading of his family, marriages, divorces, financial challenges, successes, and many failures. At the University of Illinois, he found success writing columns and sketches for the school's newspaper, *The Daily Illini*. That success gave him a level of social success, allowing him entrance to Greek life and standing. As Cohen intuits, Sherman wrote his parody songs to make friends, to gain acceptance in college, and to make a living creatively.

Sherman did gain enough public acceptance and success that he wrote several original Broadway shows with distinguished composers and big-name talent, although only one was produced. Noted composer Albert Hague joined with Sherman to write *The Fig Leaves Are Falling*, starring Dorothy Louden, who is better known as Miss Hannigan in the original Broadway cast of *Annie*. The show was a musicalization of Sherman's life at the time: his divorce, his neighbors, his unhappiness. Combined with the exigencies in his own life—the breakup of his marriage, his extensive use of alcohol and drugs, his career failures—it is no wonder the show flopped.

One special gift that Cohen offers the reader is the abundance of lyrics and parodies included in the book's appendix. They illustrate even

more clearly the talent with which Sherman was blessed, and they treat the reader to a lyrical illustration of mid-twentieth century America in general and the Jewish Northeast in particular. *Overweight Sensation* provides a captivating view of American popular culture of the era, including comedy, television, records, night clubs, and theatre. In a Pagliacci-like manner, this is the story of a brilliantly talented man using the mask of humor to cover his personal failures and sadness.

*Kenneth A. Kanter is associate dean and director of the rabbinical school at Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati. He is a well-known author and lecturer/performer in the field of the Jewish contribution to American popular music.*

**Libby Garland, *After They Closed the Gates: Jewish Illegal Immigration to the United States, 1921–1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 312 pp.**

For many scholars, 1924 represents a turning point in the history of American Jewry. That year, after decades of piecemeal measures, the federal government enacted a national quota system that all but eliminated Eastern and Southern European immigration to the United States. For historians, this cutoff marks the transition from one Jewish generation to another: from immigrant outsiders occupying ethnic enclaves who threatened the nation's social and political integrity to a cohort of young, well-educated and upwardly mobile Jews who became "white" by the midpoint of the twentieth century.

Libby Garland reexamines this basic historical narrative in her compelling and meticulously researched book, *After They Closed the Gates*. Using an impressive array of government and organizational records, newspaper accounts, memoirs, and first-hand interviews, Garland claims that the "gates simply did not close" on Jews after 1924 (3). Instead, Garland argues that an "extensive underground of illegal immigration from Europe" flowed into the United States from 1924 to 1965 (1). Using dozens of stories from places as far-flung as Mexico, Texas, and Michigan, Garland shows how illegal Jewish immigrants, experienced in "finding ways around restrictive and arbitrary-seeming laws," often confounded rigid racial and national categories created by a federal apparatus meant to manage and enforce the new quota system (129).

Garland characterizes these actions as “cautious and law-abiding” and argues that they intended to portray American Jews as a healthy and patriotic people (87). The author traces how a host of Jewish civic officials and religious leaders worked behind the scenes with immigration administrators to liberalize the quota law; and also how they framed immigrants and unnaturalized aliens as moral citizens in the 1920s and 1930s and long-suffering “refugees” after World War II. Importantly, these strategies divorced Jews from the category of “illegal immigrant” and stunted attempts to argue for immigration reform on behalf of Mexican Americans and Asian Americans. For Garland, this process revealed just how fragile the project remained for Jews, particularly of Eastern European descent, to gain social acceptance and inclusion into the country’s body politic. Garland ends by describing, albeit in a slightly rushed fashion, how the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act overturned the national quota system and imposed limits on immigration from the Western Hemisphere, resulting in an influx of illegal Mexican immigrants to the United States. The law signified, according to Garland, Jews’ “formal inclusion in the nation” and tacit acceptance for the new “mechanisms of restriction and exclusion” (212).

*After They Closed the Gates* makes a strong case that leading Jewish spokespeople and civic organizations framed the issue of illegal immigration in such a way as to expedite this “formal inclusion.” I wonder, however, the extent to which the wider American public registered illegal Jewish immigration as a major national issue. The book details how Jewish leaders debated illegal immigration behind closed doors and in private letters and internal correspondence. Did the mainstream press, major ethnic newspapers, or national elected officials also echo these debates? An affirmative answer would strengthen Garland’s claim that the entrance of tens of thousands (a number that she admittedly estimates) of illegal Jewish immigrants into the United States made them a “matter of both private and public knowledge” and further highlight the broader national significance of Jewish organizational work (147). In a similar vein, I wondered about the specific role that Jewish civic agencies and/or political representatives—in particular Emmanuel Celler, one of the law’s cosponsors, who pops up repeatedly in the book—played in the 1965 immigration act. Garland notes that the record does not reveal any serious concerns from Jewish leaders over the law’s shortcomings. However, I

remain curious about how Jewish representatives conceptualized the 1965 act and the precise nature of their silence over certain aspects of the law. What might these positions tell us about how Jewish leadership in the 1960s and 1970s conceptualized a “Jewish” immigrant past in relation to those of Latino groups? How might this have both reflected and impacted Jewish-Latino collaboration on other political issues at the time?

Still, these questions do not detract from *After They Closed the Gates*’ many contributions to the field of American Jewish History. This is a fine, densely researched book that is a must-read for anyone examining Jewish understandings of race and citizenship in the postwar United States.

*Barry Goldberg is a doctoral candidate in history at the CUNY Graduate Center. He is currently writing a dissertation that examines Jewish–Puerto Rican relations in postwar New York City. He is a 2014–2015 Rabbi Joachim Prinz Memorial Fellow at the AJA.*

**Anton Hieke, *Jewish Identity in the Reconstruction South: Ambivalence and Adaptation* (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2013), xii + 384 pp.**

“Reconstruction is largely an unknown time in American Jewish historiography,” Anton Hieke rightly claims in *Jewish Identity in the Reconstruction South: Ambivalence and Adaptation*. “In some respects,” he notes, “there is a wide gap in our understanding of southern Jewry from the period of the Civil War—which has claimed a large share of scholarly attention—to the turn of the twentieth century” (1). Hieke’s work begins to fill this lacuna by closely analyzing Jewish life in Georgia and the Carolinas. His narrow, data-rich focus allows him to debunk commonly held assumptions about Southern Jewish life in this era. Particularly, Hieke’s work questions the perception that during the so-called “German Jewish” period in American Jewish history there was a “considerable group of Jews who identified as Germans among the southern Jewish population” (2). He also challenges the idea that “German Jewish immigrants had been welcomed and integrated into southern society, and that they came to internalize a Southern identity” (2). Arguing against those commonly held assumptions, Hieke contends that there were “much less distinct, more ambivalent categories of identity that prevailed among Jews in the Reconstruction South” (2).

Hieke's work begins by questioning the German-ness of the German Jewish period in American Jewish history by claiming that it "was never close to being homogenously German" (306). First, he argues that many of the so-called German Jewish immigrants were not actually German. Though by the mid-twentieth century, Jews from Prussian Poland—who comprised a significant number of these immigrants—"had become German Jews," he notes that "in the mid-nineteenth century, they were still Polish Jews" (22). Moreover, while immigrant Jews made up a significant portion of the Jewish population of Georgia and the Carolinas in 1860, that number had declined significantly by 1880. Thus, he concludes, "the importance of immigration steadily declined over the course of Reconstruction" (41). Because of the strong presence of Prussian- and American-born Jews, Hieke concludes that "the term 'German Period' is as incorrect for its theoretical end in 1880, as it is for its supposed beginning in 1820" (309).

Hieke's work then turns to the concept of "trans-regional mobility, rooted in business" (306), adding to the standard concept of chain migration as characteristic of Jewish migration. "Reconstruction was not an era of larger Jewish immigration from Europe," he argues, "but rather of migration within the United States" (38). Because "the non-immigrant Jews' places of birth clearly indicate that residence was never static" (65), he maintains that "Reconstruction might be described as a period of population exchange between the regions of the United States. Business opportunities brought northern and western Jewish businessmen to the South; the bleak prospects of Jewish southerners drove some of them away from the South. In both cases, immigrant and American-born Jews left their home regions" (67). Because of this mobility, he argues that his research "challenges the idea of the South as a distinct and separate region within the United States..." (66).

Building off of the idea of trans-regional mobility, Hieke maintains that the Jews' *identity* was also trans-regional, because "they moved freely between the individual regions of the United States" and thus "were not fixed in their Northern or Southern identity, but were indeed utterly ambivalent" (308). Prior to conducting his research, Hieke had assumed that Jews "had been welcomed and integrated into southern society, and that they came to internalize a Southern identity," but his "findings proved these assumptions wrong" (2). "Unbroken trans-regional

mobility and strong family and business connections outside the South show that life for Jews in the South was never static,” he argues, “but often temporary. This indicates their Southern identity was but one facet in their trans-regional—American—identity” (205).

While Hieke argues that Jews did not possess a fully Southern identity, he also believes that the broader Southern society did not view them as fully white Southerners either. He maintains that Jews “were seen as whites of a different shade but not as members of the core of southern society, which was Christian” (307). Instead, he calls them the “integrated outsider” (164) and suggests that “during Reconstruction, southern Jews were subjected to a welcoming philo-Semitism coupled with a non-public anti-Semitism, i.e., anti-Semitism that is present not only in the private sphere, but also in the undisclosed sphere of private, political and business correspondence”—a concept that he refers to as “covert anti-Semitism” (108). This “non-public, covert, anti-Semitism betrayed the image of southern acceptance and overall integration created by public philo-Semitism,” (307). Thus, like others before him, Hieke questions the notion that there was “a less pronounced anti-Semitism in the South as compared to other regions in America” (151).

Finally, Hieke demonstrates how “the Reconstruction period was a formative one for Jewish religious structures in Georgia and the Carolinas”—inclusive of cemeteries, synagogues, lodges, and Jewish education—that “manifested a permanent Jewish presence” despite the trans-regional mobility (206). While focusing on Reform synagogues in the region, Hieke is adamant that American Reform was not imported by German Jews but was instead a rural American phenomenon—it reached a first peak at the end of Reconstruction, he claims, “when the importance of the German ideas and immigrants had already waned” (305). But the argument of American Reform as an American phenomenon is not new. Moreover, while a focus on institutional life is important to show how Jews began to “settle down,” rather than creating new categories of analysis, Hieke fits the regional experience under study into extant secondary literature.

*Jewish Identity in the Reconstruction South* presents a very detailed look at Georgia and the Carolinas and makes several particularly important historiographical contributions. Hieke, like others before him, problematizes the concept of a “German Jewish” wave of immigration

to the United States. Moreover, his concepts of trans-regional mobility and trans-regional identity within the United States are also particularly important. How applicable this detailed regional study is to other areas of the South remains to be seen. My guess, however, is that Hieke's concepts of trans-regional mobility and identity will shape future historiography on the Reconstruction era of American Jewish history.

*Michael Cohen is an assistant professor of Jewish studies at Tulane University, where he holds Mellon and Sizeler professorships. He is the author of The Birth of Conservative Judaism: Solomon Schechter's Disciples and the Creation of an American Religious Movement. His current research focuses on Jewish merchants in the postbellum Gulf South.*

**Richard G. Hirsch, *For the Sake of Zion—Reform Zionism: A Personal Mission* (New York: URJ Press, 2011), 360 pp.**

Rabbi Richard G. Hirsch's deeply felt recounting of the development of Reform Judaism in Israel will strike many in the movement, especially more senior members, as a powerful memoir of what it took to establish a massive paradigm shift in Reform attitudes regarding Israel and our place there. With Hirsch, the story is in more than capable hands. His achievements are legend, from serving as president of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, to spearheading the Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA) and the Reform kibbutz movement. In 1992 he ran against Simcha Dinitz for chair of the World Zionist Organization and lost, if not narrowly, then at least acceptably. Hirsch supporters, including Rabbi Alexander Schindler, saw the election not as a loss but as a victory for the aspirations of liberal Judaism. It sent a message that Reform Judaism in Israel finally had a place at the table (254).

That was not always the case, as this book reminds us. One recalls with discomfort the cool, almost hostile, approach to Zionism of the Reform generation of the early and mid-twentieth century—that is, the remnants of Classical Reform. The American Council for Judaism and its sympathizers considered Judaism a faith community exclusively and themselves “Jewish-Americans,” not “American Jews.” They had influence, and they had the means to peddle that Jewish pathology widely. The angst that defined them, and along with them many Reform Jews who were more moderate, was a gnawing uneasiness at being

perceived as not sufficiently American and, along with it, the dreaded accusation of dual loyalties. One is reminded of the German Jewish crowd of mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century who resolved to be German above all other definitions. Is it any wonder that Herzl found so little sympathy in those areas of Western and Central Europe where the vision of Haskalah had morphed into the reality of full acculturation, even assimilation?

The founders of American Reform sprang from those very German roots, and the generation that followed them into the twentieth century, with notable exception, was nursed of the same mother's milk of Jewish defensiveness. For every staunch Zionist—for every Stephen S. Wise and Abba Hillel Silver—there were a dozen Leo Baecks, Hugo Bergmans and Nelson Gluecks who were not at all excited about the *moledet* (homeland). In the late 1960s Hirsch was quoted as saying, "Although Reform rabbis changed their [anti-Zionist] stance in 1937 [with the Columbus Platform] and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations adopted a pro-Zionist position, the Reform movement has yet to embrace the full consequences resulting from the establishment of the State of Israel" (xxi). How true. The old guard was mostly at arm's length when it came to Israel.

When a new generation came along in the midsixties, at the time of the Six Day War, the Reform-Zionist world was shifting measurably. Still, the lingering message to young Reform rabbis in congregations was clear: What really matters to our people are the values of "prophetic Judaism," not Jewish peoplehood and certainly not narrow Jewish nationalism. Of course, in due time we came to understand that there need not be a distinction. Some of us found exactly the support we had been searching for in the voice of Dick Hirsch. When he spoke at Central Conference of American Rabbis conventions and Union for Reform Judaism biennials in that very decade it was eye opening—and comforting, too. In his passionate Zionist messages many of us discovered our own muted voices and recognized them as authentic expressions of Reform. It was clear that "Israel had become the center stage for the enactment of the Jewish drama" (xxiv), and in that realization came a new Reform-Zionist empowerment, and along with it a bold generation of Reform leaders—mostly younger—who refused to be left in the dust.

And, yet, it cuts both ways. The question is not only who we are but also what Israel is and must be. As Hirsch writes, “The Jewish state needs a synthesis of Zionism and Judaism” (20). That means liberal Judaism as well as Orthodoxy. But what a tall order that is in a religious-political universe where liberal Judaism has been disqualified by the power of coalition politics and the chief rabbinate. Hirsch discusses the question of officiation at marriages. Non-Orthodox rabbis have had no standing, and many Israelis have flown to Cyprus for secular marriage documentation. The same goes for conversion, as well as immigration under Orthodox interpretation of “The Law of Return,” which leads to the gnawing question, “Who is a Jew?” How ironic that the enlightened thirteenth-century rabbinic authority of Barcelona, Solomon ibn Adret, defined Jewish status with a great deal more leniency than do members of the twenty-first-century Orthodox rabbinate when he offered his famous responsum: “No one has the right to say to a Jew: prove that you are a Jew.” It is painful to recall the ignominious and insulting rabbinical ruling that Ethiopian *olim* of Operations Moses and Solomon would be required to immerse in the Sea of Galilee—a makeshift *mikveh*—to fulfill the halakhic requirements of *giyyur* (conversion), when their ancestors were probably closer genetically to First Temple Jews than were the very Ashkenazi rabbis who sat in judgment.

Hirsch says: “Contrary to the image projected in the Knesset and in the media, this is not only a struggle for vested interests to win rights for Reform and Conservative rabbis. It is above all a struggle to create an open, inclusive democratic society [and] to welcome all who wish to participate in the upbuilding of the Jewish state (95). Some readers may hear echoes of the charismatic young Hirsch in these words: “No geographical boundaries or theological barriers can divide the Jewish people and Jewish destiny” (46). What a warrior for liberal rights and for human rights in Israel he has been.

The first section of the book is mainly subdivided into introductory themes, perhaps the most important being, “Why Reform Zionism is Different.” He answers: Because it is “a vibrant, dynamic movement of progressive Judaism” (12). He does not by any means rule out the Masorti movement and has encouraged and worked closely with Conservative rabbis in Israel, especially Levi Kelman, who founded the very successful Kol HaNeshama Congregation in Jerusalem. Reform and Conservative

movements in Israel stand shoulder to shoulder in juxtaposition to monolithic and often tyrannical Orthodoxy.

On the subject of the ever-controversial West Bank settlements, Hirsch is unequivocal when he asks: “Do Diaspora Jews have a right to participate in this debate?” He submits that we not only have a right but “an obligation” (58) if Israel is to remain Jewish and democratic. “If Israel does not relinquish the bulk of the West Bank ... in favor of a Palestinian state, it will be forced to incorporate millions of Arabs into Israeli society... [and] the Jewish character of the Jewish state will be undermined and could eventually disappear” (59). He addresses the unacceptable possibility of maintaining the status quo indefinitely: “If there is no Palestinian state and the Arabs [on the West Bank] are not given full rights as citizens then Israel will not be a democracy” (63). Both conclusions are self-evident.

Hirsch calls the book’s final part, “Getting Things Done.” Richard Hirsch has certainly done exactly that and, one might easily argue, to an extent far and above any other leader of liberal Judaism.

*David Goldstein is rabbi emeritus of Touro Synagogue in New Orleans and a member of the faculty of the Tulane University Jewish studies department.*

**Melissa R. Klapper, *Ballots, Babies, and Banners of Peace: American Jewish Women’s Activism, 1890–1940* (New York University Press, 2013), 301 pp.**

History, we know, is written by the winners, and in this way, women are no better than men. The mainstream histories and common understanding of three major movements for change in early-twentieth-century American life—suffrage, birth control, and peace—have been shaped by a largely Christian point of view. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Alice Paul dominate accounts of the long fight for women’s suffrage. Margaret Sanger is nearly synonymous with birth control. Peace is a bit more complicated; within the span of years covered in this book, Jane Adams and Carrie Chapman Catt overwhelm accounts of an international antiwar movement, but as the cancer of Nazism rises in Europe, Jews of both genders become prominent.

Klapper writes to restore Jewish women to their rightful place in these histories as well as to insert women’s activism—from “respectable”

organizations such as the National Council of Jewish Women to renegade leftists and communists—into the panorama of American Jewish life. This is a huge undertaking, requiring industrious use of voluminous American, Hebrew, and Yiddish sources—institutional histories, private letters, and periodicals and newspapers of all positions and constituencies. She pays less attention, surprisingly, to artists and writers—such as Muriel Rukeyser, whose work was powerfully “activist” in many ways—but the act of breaking new ground, as this book does, always points to more to be done.

So, too, do the intriguing footnotes in this book. Far beyond identifying sources, Klapper’s notes encompass huge swaths of recent feminist scholarship on the issues under discussion and act as hints to what else might be uncovered, what other questions might be asked.

So think of Klapper as a cartographer, surveying the lay of the land, marking the parameters, stamping in the names of people and organizations, sketching in the roads and bridges of a most complicated country. The suffrage movement, in her hands, highlights Pauline Newman, Rebekah Kohut, and Maud Nathan, as well as the lesser-known Amy Schwartz Oppenheim, Anita Pollitzer, and Caroline Katzenstein. The section on birth control reminds readers of Emma Goldman and adds Jewish women as consumers and supporters of family planning. When it comes to peace, Klapper does a superb job of tracking women whose lifelong opposition to war is shaken to the core by Hitler.

How difficult it is to disentangle the strands of complexity here. The people in these movements range from socialites to socialists (rarely, though sometimes, one and the same), workers, and housewives. Some belong to organized groups such as the National Council of Jewish Women; others do not. Some, like Maud Nathan, assert Jewish beliefs as the core of their embrace of social justice; others, such as Lillian Wald, do not. Some were observant; others, not. Women worked in several movements at the same time or changed affiliations or shifted focus. So-called “leaders” with antisemitic leanings—Stanton and Paul, especially—still had close Jewish allies. And around it all, the frame of the story, is American life and the evolving issues of assimilation, power, community, and sisterhood.

To her credit, Klapper deftly lays out the complexities and resists the temptation to generalize or simplify. Although it is difficult at times to

make your way through pages dense with acronyms (NCJW, WILPF, NWP, NCPW), frustrating at times to skim details of lives that likely deserve entire biographies, and maddening at times to endure the placid even-handedness that is still the mark of a scholarly voice, no matter. This book is an opening, a gift, an invitation, and anyone who writes on these subjects after her owes the author a massive debt of gratitude for the map she has drawn.

*Louise Bernikow was a 2012–2013 Loewenstein-Wiener Fellow at the American Jewish Archives. She is the author of nine books and a popular speaker on activist women's history. Her new book is about the fight for the vote in New York City.*

**Josh Lambert, *Unclean Lips: Obscenity, Jews, and American Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 215 pp.**

The conventional belief that Americans have long had the right of “free speech”—that is, the liberty to express themselves wherever, whenever, and about whatever—is a myth. Until 1925, the U.S. Supreme Court held that the Constitution forbade federal regulation of First Amendment liberties but permitted local and state governments to police the so-called “five freedoms.” This is in part why, for most of the country’s history, the range of what Americans could publicly express was quite narrow. Only over the course of the twentieth century, as a result of the work of First Amendment activists and lawyers, did courts gradually curb governmental regulation of speech, ultimately broadening Americans’ legal capacity to express themselves. Despite the hardships and labor involved in transforming Americans’ speech rights—a past in which publishing works such as *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* and *Ulysses* landed one in jail—this effort has been largely forgotten and, thanks to the rise of the Internet and the flood of speech that followed, is all but inconceivable.

In *Unclean Lips: Obscenity, Jews, and American Culture*, cultural historian and literary scholar Josh Lambert highlights one essential transformation within broader changes to Americans’ speech rights: He focuses on obscenity—that is, expressions about sex that were identified as exceeding the boundaries of good taste, respectability, and law. As Lambert illustrates, throughout the twentieth century, Jewish writers, publishers, and lawyers created, distributed, and legally represented

literary publications that the police, judges, legislators, and anti-vice societies identified as depraved, immoral, and oftentimes illegal. Analyzing “obscene” novels and plays, Lambert argues that Jews and Jewishness were central to changes in how Americans identified and understood what constituted acceptable speech. In the context of the relationship between Jews and obscenity, Lambert defines four aspects of “Jewishness”: (1) sensitivity to antisemitism expressed by the championing of sexual liberation and, in some cases, sexual deviance; (2) particular economic responses to social marginalization; (3) illustrations of anxiety concerning Jewish biological and cultural reproduction; and (4) preoccupations with notions of modesty as a method of self-policing.

This book’s four chapters illuminate connections among Jewish writers and publishers, literary works, and definitions of obscenity as legal and cultural standards. Thematically organized, each chapter focuses on one component of Lambert’s aforementioned definition of “Jewishness” and spans chronologically from the late nineteenth century through the 1960s. Chapter one examines plays and novels between the late nineteenth century and the postwar period. It shows how Jewish writers hopefully if naively linked sexual liberation with the decline of antisemitism. Chapter two shows how Jewish writers and publishers produced works that they believed would earn them literary prestige and thereby mitigate their social marginalization. The third chapter explores Jewish anxieties about biological and cultural reproduction in novels of the 1960s and 1970s. Finally, the fourth chapter links the works of early-twentieth-century Yiddish writers with those of late-twentieth-century modernists by showing both groups’ conceptual use of modesty and practice of self-censorship when discussing sex.

This book is well organized, especially given the amount of material analyzed. As he aimed to do, Lambert gives readers an analytical device that they can apply to other twentieth-century American Jewish cultural works. For example, this writer recently saw a production of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *Oklahoma!* (1943) and wondered if the song “I Cain’t Say No,” sung by a young, coquettish woman disclosing her inability to deny herself the pleasure of men’s company, conforms to Lambert’s proposition that Jewish writers’ advocacy of sexual liberation was a method of combatting antisemitism. “I’m just a fool when the lights are low; I cain’t be a prissy an’ quaint,” the character Ado Annie

coos, singing about her illicit romance with Ali Hakim, a peddler and clear outsider to the show's setting, pre-state Oklahoma.

This is a well-written, at times playful, book and is accessible for readers who are familiar with some but not all of the discussed texts. Lambert evidently enjoyed reading, thinking, and writing about his source material. His examination of the function of birth control in Saul Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March* and Philip Roth's *Letting Go* is among the book's most thought-provoking passages. Discussing *Letting Go*, Lambert shows how Roth's narrative—which involves the marriage of a Jewish man to a Catholic woman, her subsequent conversion to Judaism, their decision to terminate a pregnancy, and, finally, their adoption of a child—reflected communal concerns about reproduction, intermarriage, and racial and cultural continuity.

Lambert's book constitutes the first effort to understand how Jews were instrumental in the evolution of the legal standard of obscenity and his work reveals profitable future research about Jews and the broadening of First Amendment rights, a literature that is otherwise nonexistent. The lack of scholarly work on this topic is unfortunate because, had Lambert had access to as much, he could have more definitively answered the question that he repeatedly raises and then shies away from—that is, did Jews relate differently to obscenity than non-Jews? Lambert parries at times, but his evidence shows that Jews *did* have different relationships with obscenity than non-Jews, just as they had different relationships with other speech standards compared with non-Jews. As Lambert notes, this was not because of a uniquely Jewish characteristic but rather because non-Jews identified Jews as such when they spoke. Relatedly, whether identifying Jews' speech as obscene, libelous, or seditious, some non-Jews—mostly elite, white, Protestants—disliked what some Jews had to say and often tried to silence them by way of prosecution. This is why and how Jewish writers, publishers, lawyers, activists, and others found themselves at the center of legal proceedings about free expression and ultimately became linchpins in the broadening of First Amendment rights. The absence of the broader legal context of speech rights transformation in Lambert's book obscures Jewish difference and the role of Jews in the expansion of First Amendment liberties generally. But this is a minor criticism of an intriguing work. Ultimately, *Unclean Lips* is a thoroughly researched and thoughtful volume.

*Britt Tevis is a doctoral candidate in the department of history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 2012.*

**Joseph R. Reinhart, translator & editor, *Yankee Dutchmen Under Fire: Civil War Letters from the 82<sup>nd</sup> Illinois Infantry* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2013), xiii + 262 pp.**

The 82<sup>nd</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, a German regiment that fought for the Union during the Civil War, is remembered by American Jewish historians for its Company C, one of two Jewish companies to battle on the Union's behalf. Chicago's German Jews organized Company C, paid handsome bounties to those mustered into its ranks, and held at least three public meetings to display their patriotism before the larger community.

*Yankee Dutchmen Under Fire* offers a wealth of new information concerning Company C and the larger German regiment of which it was a part. The information is based on sixty-one German-language letters—twenty-six of them private correspondence, mostly addressed to the regiment's founder, Friedrich Hecker; and thirty-five public letters published in German-language newspapers such as the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung*. The letters are ably translated into English, introduced, and annotated.

American Jewish historians can learn much from these letters. First, they provide valuable new information concerning the Civil War exploits of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Illinois, including the part it played in the battles of Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Atlanta, and the march to the sea. Second, the letters reveal more than we have known before concerning Edward S. Salomon, commander of Company C and a hero of Gettysburg—but, as we learn, far from universally beloved and trusted by his men. Following the war, Salomon was one of few Jews brevetted as a brigadier general. Third, the letters add to our understanding of Jewish women's roles during the Civil War. Chicago's Jewish women, we learn, provided the 82<sup>nd</sup> Regiment with its flag (“in the name of the Israelite ladies” [26]) and also dispatched a committee (led by men) to report on conditions at Camp Butler, where the troops trained.

Most important of all, these letters shed light on the complex relationship between non-Jewish German immigrants and their German-Jewish neighbors. The public letters overflow with respect: “our fellow

Israelite citizens are totally imbued with the noble human and freedom loving spirit” (24). By contrast, some of the private letters drip with venomous comments concerning “the creole of Jerusalem” (Salomon), the “sly” character of “these people,” and the “synagogue” (113, 148, 154). The Germans of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, of course, were not necessarily representative of all German immigrants, nor were the letter-writers among them necessarily representative of the regiment as a whole. It is nevertheless fascinating to see both sides of the historiographical debate concerning the relationship between German-Jewish immigrants and the larger German immigrant community—those who think that the relationship was good and those who think that the relationship was bad—reflected in this slim volume.

*Yankee Dutchmen Under Fire* is primarily aimed at students of German-American history. The letters it makes available contribute significantly to our understanding of the wartime experience of the 200,000 German-born Americans who fought in the Union’s ranks. At the same time, the volume also serves as yet another reminder that foreign-language primary sources have been insufficiently explored by students of American and American Jewish life. Many still await discovery.

*Jonathan D. Sarna is the Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University, chief historian of the National Museum of American Jewish History, and co-chair of the Academic Advisory and Editorial Board of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives. His three Civil War-related books are When General Grant Expelled the Jews, Jews and the Civil War (with Adam Mendelsohn), and Lincoln and the Jews: A History (with Benjamin Shapell).*

**Ira Robinson, ed., *Canada’s Jews: In Time, Space and Spirit* (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2013), 501 pp.**

Anthologies on Canadian Jewry have appeared regularly since 1981 as a means for Canadian Jewish studies scholars to elucidate the extent and depth of Canadian Jewry: *The Canadian Jewish Mosaic* (1981), *The Jews in Canada* (1993), and in 2004 *The Canadian Jewish Reader*. *Canada’s Jews* is a timely addition to the roster. The twenty-six essays attesting to Canadian Jewish life range from Ira Robinson’s three-page overview of the Atlantic Jewish community to Richard Menkis’

thirty-five- page essay on the state of Conservative Judaism in Canada. There is “inevitable overlap”; however, since “each writer gives a different shape to the materials at hand” (10), the overlap, where it occurs, adds to rather than detracts from the discussion.

Excepting the article on Reform Judaism, the essays were written specifically for this volume. *Canada's Jews* is divided into three sections: section one, “In Time: Canadian Jews and Their History”; section two, “In Space: Jews in Contemporary Canada”; and section three, “In Spirit: The Religious and Cultural Expressions of Canadian Jews.”

Section one, “In Time,” is the shortest section: seven essays and 106 pages. It opens with Pierre Anctil's brief overview of New France and its famed stowaway, Esther Brandeau, and ends with Frank Bialystok's depiction of almost seventy years of Canadian Jewish history (the end of World War II to 2011). Between these two, Maxine Jacobson and Steven Lapidus describe Canadian Jewish life prior to 1881: an “idyllic time” when Jews then living and working in Montreal, Toronto, and Victoria really were “just like everyone else.” The essay on Jewish farming communities by Howard Gontovnick demonstrates how farming became one response to “counter the image of the ‘unproductive Jew’” (41, 49–50) as the Jewish establishment and the Canadian government encouraged immigrants to avoid the cities and work the land. Ruth Frager illustrates the extensive difficulties faced by the East European Jewish immigrant to Montreal and Toronto and how these became the catalyst for the development of *landsmanshaftn* and unions. The historic role of Canadian Jewish Congress and its efforts to create a national voice for Canadian Jewry is outlined in Jack Lipinsky's instructive essay.

Section two, “In Space,” contains ten essays covering 154 pages. Randal Schnoor's overview of Canadian Jewry's demography and Harold Waller's essay demystifying the organizational structure of the Jewish community opens this section. The remaining eight essays cover the variants of Jewish life from the Eastern Seaboard to the Pacific Coast. Ira Robinson presents too brief summaries of Atlantic Canada and Winnipeg, the city once called “The Jerusalem of North America.” Morton Weinfeld's interesting juxtaposition of the historic language and cultural barriers between Ashkenazi Montreal Jewry and French Quebec, with data indicating that Montreal Jewry has the highest level of religious observance in North America, raises more questions

than it answers. Yolanda Cohen's essay on the blossoming Sephardic communities in Montreal notes how their shared French language has created other challenges for the maintenance of their Sephardic heritage. The current state of Toronto Jewry is outlined by Michael Brown, and Ellen Scheinberg's descriptive commentary is a reminder that Jewish communal life was once vibrant and fulfilling in the small towns north, west, and east of Toronto. Debby Schocter provides a concise history of Jewish communal development (ca. 1880–2000) in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and the North; and Cyril Leonoff and Cynthia Ramsey showcase the nation's third largest Jewish community, Vancouver.

Section three, "In Spirit" contains eight essays comprising 172 pages. The first two essays provide a glimpse into Canada's Orthodox Jewish communities: Ira Robinson on Modern Orthodoxy and William Shaffir on Toronto's and Montreal's Hasidic communities. The next two essays are by Richard Menkis—the first on Reform Judaism: its history and the adaptation, by American Reform rabbis, to the Canadian Jewish milieu; the second, an intriguing assessment of the status of Conservative Judaism in Canada. The following four essays provide detailed treatments on the culture of Canadian Jewry. Rebecca Margolis articulates the transformation of Yiddish from the "lingua franca of ... an estimated eleven million speakers" to its current status as one "symbolic" expression of Jewish identity (344). Alex Hart's extensive overview of the Canadian Jewish literary scene introduces English-language novels and poetry from the nineteenth century to 2011. Chantal Ringuet presents the "complex images of Jews and Jewishness" (416) as they appear in French Canadian literature. Loren Lerner and Suzanne Rackover's essay celebrates more than one hundred years of Canadian Jewish artists and their works, from "vibrant expressionist paintings," (425) to lithographs, to multimedia creations.

David Koffman has the last word with his closing essay, reviewing the "recent work among scholars of the Canadian Jewish experience" and revealing the many gaps in support (i.e., the lack of interest in "Canadian Jewish studies among Canadian Jews)" (465), and knowledge (i.e., the lack of support for cultural and comparative studies). The book itself falls short in several areas: volunteerism—key to the maintenance of Canadian Jewish communities—was not covered, nor was space made for an update on the status of Canadian Jewish women (the last "in-depth" article being Michael Brown's, in 2005).

It is refreshing to note that archivists, freelance researchers, and academics outside the established Canadian Jewry fold were contributors to this volume, alongside those scholars well known to readers of Canadian Jewish studies. There seemed to be an intent not to weigh the reader down with footnotes; the section “For Further Study” presented after most of the chapters is an excellent way to invite the reader to step further into the topic. *Canada’s Jews* has the potential to be a “go-to” resource for Canadian Jewish studies, to be used as a textbook and reference book. It is up to those in the field to promote and encourage its use.

*Susan Landau-Chark, PhD., provost of the Metivta of Ottawa, is an educator and independent researcher and writer. Her most recent article is “Canada,” which appeared in The Jewish Emigrant from Britain 1700–2000: Essays in Memory of Lloyd P. Gartner. Her current project is unearthing the presence of Jewish smugglers during the War of 1812.*

**Mel Scult, *The Radical American Judaism of Mordecai M. Kaplan* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 360 pp.**

Mordecai Kaplan may well have been the most important Jewish religious thinker and practitioner of the twentieth century. The opening sections of his first major book, *Judaism as a Civilization*, reflect his genius and indicate that he understood and was unparalleled in his ability to articulate the challenges that the modern world presented to Judaism. The remainder of that work and his myriad other writings and actions demonstrate that no one was more creatively or tirelessly devoted than he to reconstructing Judaism so that it could meet the trials of the contemporary world. As a professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) for half a century, as a pulpit rabbi in both Orthodox and liberal synagogues, as a writer in numerous popular and academic journals, as a scholar of Jewish thought and Midrash, as the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, as editor of the *Reconstructionist Journal*, as the author of Jewish liturgy, and as a lecturer throughout North America and Israel, his influence on Jewish thought and institutions was immense. His energy was boundless and his broad intellect allowed him to draw on countless sources as the inspiration for his thought and programs. There is scarcely an organization or movement in Jewish life that he did not influence.

For decades no one has presented the work of Kaplan more comprehensively or insightfully than Mel Scult. His publication of the Kaplan journals combined with his own expertise in modern philosophy, sociology, and religious thought—as well as his vast knowledge of rabbinic literature and modern Jewish thought and history—have made Scult the premier commentator upon the meaning and significance of the Kaplan corpus. Each of his many previous publications has added to our knowledge of Kaplan. Indeed, so prolific has Scult been in his work on Kaplan that when I first opened *The Radical American Judaism of Mordecai M. Kaplan* I wondered if there was anything more Scult might have to teach me on Kaplan and his importance. Suffice it to say, he has. Indeed, this book is the work of a mature scholar. It displays the erudition Scult has acquired over a lifetime of research on Kaplan and is unparalleled in its clarity as well as in the breadth and depth of its treatment of Kaplan—his writings, his achievements, and his meaning for Judaism and the Jewish people today and in the future.

Scult begins his study by citing the infamous excommunication the Orthodox Agudas HaRabonim pronounced upon the Kaplan prayer book in 1945 and compares and contrasts his Jewish background and rational orientation with the life and thought of another famed excommunicant of the Jewish community: Baruch Spinoza. From there, Scult takes the reader on an intellectually compelling journey that recounts how Ralph Waldo Emerson, Ahad Ha-Am, Matthew Arnold, William James, and John Dewey all served as seminal intellectual influences upon Kaplan. In chapters that deal with the impact these thinkers had upon Kaplan, one is amazed at his extraordinary ability to synthesize all these diverse persons with the sources of Jewish history and literature so as to create and conceptualize a program for Reconstructionist Judaism in our day.

In explicating these myriad influences upon Kaplan, Scult correctly underscores that Kaplan always envisioned the Jewish people as residing at the heart of Judaism. Kaplan created what he himself termed a “Copernican Revolution in Jewish thought,” for the tenets of modern knowledge meant that a supernatural understanding of Judaism, where a personal God was placed at the center of Jewish faith, was for him no longer a viable position. While many rabbis and laypeople were uncomfortable with these Kaplanian formulations of Jewish faith, Kaplan refused to abandon his emphasis upon the centrality of peoplehood and community—not

a personal God—in his conceptualization of Judaism and Jewish life, and Scult skillfully recounts this trope in his thought in the chapter on “Kaplan and Peoplehood: Judaism as a Civilization and Zionism.”

What is particularly original and insightful about the account that Scult presents is his brilliant and somewhat unexpected portrayal of Kaplan as a *religious* thinker. In chapters devoted to the Kaplanian view of God; to the topics of theology, salvation, and evil in Kaplanian thought; to the relationship between Kaplan and his JTS colleague Abraham Joshua Heschel; and to his treatment of classical Jewish notions of *mitzvot*, halakhah, and ethics, Scult demonstrates that the religious views of Kaplan are much more complex and multilayered than one might normally suppose. While Scult acknowledges that Kaplan was a religious naturalist who approached religion with a rationalist bent, he also argues that Kaplan was above all a rabbi—not a systematic philosopher. As a result, his treatment of all the topics mentioned above was not that of a systematic thinker, and the reverence Kaplan had for the traditions in which he was raised allowed him to display frequently profound religious sensibilities and an openness to transcendence that one does not normally associate with him.

*The Radical American Judaism of Mordecai M. Kaplan* is a work that will richly reward its readers, scholars and laypersons alike. One will come to understand why Kaplan had such a profound influence upon virtually all sectors of American Judaism during his lifetime and will appreciate why his radicalism and passion remain so relevant to liberal Judaism today. We are indebted to Scult for this comprehensive and weighty book and for the indispensable guidance it offers those who seek to construct Jewish life and thought now and in the future.

*David Ellenson is chancellor of Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion. His most recent book is Jewish Meaning in a World of Choice.*

**Eran Shalev, *American Zion: The Old Testament as a Political Text from the Revolution to the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 239 pp.**

Studies of Jewish influence on American culture have tended to fall into two camps: (1) those that focus on contributions of specific Jews from the era in question and (2) those that analyze the impact of Jewish texts

and ideas upon American intellectual and political history. Eran Shalev's *American Zion* breaks from the recent trend of focusing on specific Jews and instead provides an important contribution to this latter camp. In *American Zion*, Shalev argues that between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, a "biblical world of Hebraic political imagination" flourished and then withered away. Tropes, images, and narratives from the Hebrew Bible alleviated anxieties about the limits of human authority and legitimized American federalism and republicanism. Moreover, despite the ultimate decline of Hebraism, the legacy of the United States as a chosen nation of Israelites still lingers today. In making these claims for Hebraism, Shalev seeks to transform our understanding of early American political culture. As such, his work is an important addition to the field of American history and politics.

In the first section of *American Zion*, Shalev demonstrates the various ways that early Americans used the history of the Israelite nation to justify their own republicanism and federalism. Shalev is a master of early American political rhetoric. His previous book, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores: Historical Imagination and the Creation of the American Republic*, shows the importance of the classical legacy for early American thought. In the first chapter of *American Zion*, Shalev builds off of this base and notices how early Americans adapted and reworked the fundamentals of classical thought through "Old Testament" narratives and figures. Crucially, Shalev believes that biblical republicanism can help explain the apparent mismatch between the anti-authoritarian aspects of American culture and the restrictive nature of classical republicanism. Rather than solely focusing on early American uses of Exodus, Shalev expands his scope to explore how early Americans used Ahasuerus, Gideon, and the curse of Meroz to understand liberty and republicanism. In the second chapter, he explores how early American politicians, clergy, and intellectuals used the "Mosaic constitution" as a template for federalism. Shalev notes the particular utility of the pre-Monarchical "republican" phase of Jewish history for justifying and understanding American politics. The Bible was not as much a blueprint as a tool that the leaders of the American Revolution used to rationalize and legitimize their politics.

In the second section of his book, Shalev demonstrates how early Americans relied on the "distinct language, narrative forms, and

history” of the Hebrew Bible to “formulate a biblical past for America and sanctify their present” (13). As Shalev explains in chapter three, early Americans most commonly accessed the “distinctive language” of the Hebrew Bible via the King James translation, and numerous early American accounts and histories employed a pseudobiblical style to sanctify their stories. Although eventually this baroque style gave way to a more inclusive, democratic discourse, the most famous and enduring legacy of the pseudobiblical style is the Book of Mormon. In chapter four Shalev turns his attention from style to narrative and focuses on the trope of the lost tribes in nineteenth-century American nationalism. Here his argument takes a more religious turn, since, he explains, the “dividends of connecting biblical Israel and America through a unified historical narrative, one in which ancient Israelites migrated [to] and inhabited what would become the United States, were of potentially millenarian magnitude” (150).

In the concluding chapters, Shalev explains why political Hebraism withered by the middle of the nineteenth century. Earlier, he suggested that the midcentury need for a more democratic idiom contributed to the demise of Hebraism; and in chapter five, he explores the paradox of why the golden age of Hebraism coincided not with an increased secularization in American life but rather with a religious revival. Shalev notes that this revival was more New Testament centered than either the initial Puritan migration or the First Great Awakening. This new focus on Jesus, Shalev argues, reflected a desire to employ a biblical language that was more amenable to democracy and political empowerment. Slavery was also key to the shift. While the story of the Exodus from Egypt remained powerful, the narrative began to be co-opted for discussions of American slavery rather than reserved for nationalism. As such, the Exodus narrative became more resonant for a “Black Zion” than an American one.

Most previous studies of Hebraism have not surprisingly focused on the impact of the Hebrew Bible on early American religious thought—for example, Lisa Gordis’s masterful *Opening Scripture: Bible Reading and Interpretive Authority in Puritan New England* and Sacvan Bercovitch’s groundbreaking *The American Jeremiad* and *Puritan Origins of the American Self*. Shalev’s analysis of the importance of biblical Hebraism for American political thought represents a new focus and fills an

important gap in the scholarship. Equally compelling, his interest in the intersection of Hebraism and classicism helps explain how politicians were able to make these crucial discourses speak to one another.

Despite these numerous strengths, *American Zion* feels a bit backward glancing in its methods. Although it has become popular to be suspicious of the narrative of American exceptionalism (something Shalev himself recognizes on page 228), Shalev at times falls back into the search for what is “distinctly” or “truly” American (2, 95, 117). Similarly, whereas many scholars in American studies have aggressively sought in recent years to denaturalize the identification of “America” with the United States, Shalev’s analysis tends to reinforce these boundaries and generally avoids transnationalist arguments. However, perhaps Shalev is merely ahead of the pack, and his neonationalism reflects a new turn in the scholarship rather than a regression. All said, *American Zion* is an important scholarly work that provides a major contribution to understanding the impact of Jewish thought on American political and intellectual history. The book should have great appeal to those intrigued by the American Revolution, American politics, or the impact of Jewish thought on American life.

*Laura Arnold Leibman is professor of English and humanities at Reed College. Her most recent book is Messianism, Secrecy, and Mysticism: A New Interpretation of Early American Jewish Life.*

**M.M. Silver, *Louis Marshall and the Rise of Jewish Ethnicity in America* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2013), 644 pp.**

The subject of this book is Louis Marshall (1856–1929), the lawyer and Jewish leader who dominated the politics of immigration, civil rights, and Jewish American identity during the first third of the twentieth century. Marshall was the most preeminent secular Jew of his day and also his generation’s foremost Supreme Court advocate. Either of those accomplishments would justify a full-length biography; together, they mark him as a historically significant figure who has strangely been relegated to the sidelines in most historical accounts.

M.M. Silver aspires to correct that omission. He comprehensively documents Marshall’s career, reconstructing not only famous incidents but also less well-known events. For decades, scholars have had only two sources upon which to rely: Oscar Handlin’s substantial introduction

to the two-volume edition of Marshall's papers, published in 1957; and Morton Rosenstock's paean to Marshall's handling of Jewish civil rights, which appeared in 1964. Anyone writing on Marshall faces the twin challenges of expanding on Handlin's narrative and improving significantly on Rosenstock's unreflected hagiography.

The task of chronicling Marshall is a daunting one. His papers at the American Jewish Archives are voluminous and not easy to use. Silver is to be commended for performing the labor necessary to write this book. He follows Marshall's path from boyhood in Syracuse to nationally prominent lawyer in New York City. Marshall was both lawyer and activist; as Silver concedes, many of Marshall's accomplishments took place in courts, legislatures, and constitutional conventions. Yet Silver argues that Marshall's career should be understood in terms of its contribution to the development of "a discernible form of American Jewish ethnicity" (xiii), rather than his impact on the course of American law.

This is an unnecessary dilemma. Just as Marshall consistently believed that American Jews could be both Jewish and fully American, Marshall himself was both lawyer and Jew. To sublimate the professional identity Marshall derived from being a lawyer to a focus on ethnic identity limits the relevance of this biography for legal historians. Marshall represented a current of American constitutional development that the New Deal repudiated. His beliefs in the rights of corporations, the privileges of property, and the assumptions of the era of substantive due process sat at odds with his belief in equal citizenship, his opposition to restrictions on immigration, and his service as counsel to the NAACP. A reconciliation of the two sides of Marshall's legal thought will not be found here.

The book must instead be appraised for what it contributes to American Jewish history. Marshall left an imprint on nearly every controversy involving the status of American Jews between 1890 and 1929. Silver recounts the signal events in Marshall's life: joining New York City's oldest and most distinguished law firm; organizing the American Jewish Committee and his term as its president (1912–1929); brokering various disputes in New York City (the Rabbi Joseph funeral riot, the cloakmakers' strike of 1910); securing the abrogation of the 1832 treaty with Russia; negotiating the minority rights treaty after World War I; working to help Jews around the world; addressing tensions in Palestine after the Balfour Declaration; and others.

Marshall's admirers will find much here that reinforces what they already believe. Marshall's successes are "spectacular," his failures few and inconsequential. Yet it is precisely because Silver's account is so comprehensive that one expects more than the lionizing treatments of Handlin and Rosenstock. Yet, like them, Silver cannot detach himself from Marshall's heroic persona. The creation of the AJC is a triumph of Marshall's organizational impulses, and contemporary and historical critiques of the AJC are elided (108). Marshall "never really encountered a situation in which legislative or trial processes tailored to his own professional background unequivocally failed" (271). Marshall is somehow able to take control of the renegade movement that produced the rival American Jewish Congress, even though its very existence was a repudiation of him and the AJC (300).

This adoring interpretation will disappoint anyone looking for a balanced, multidimensional portrait. Silver writes of Marshall's actions during World War I: "It is difficult in some of these instances to sort out whether his or his adversaries' positions were better vindicated by subsequent events on the Continent and in North America" (249). It is the biographer's task to do the hard work of sorting and analyzing that enables historical judgment. Silver eagerly takes up this task when Marshall has succeeded and defers it when the results are less complimentary. The Leo Frank case is one example. When Frank, a factory manager, was convicted of rape and murder in Atlanta, Marshall counseled against public protests. Marshall's insistence on this approach "created a vacuum" where there should have been leadership (257). That is as direct a criticism of Marshall's leadership style as Silver can countenance.

When Silver discusses the Henry Ford matter, he insulates Marshall from the consequences of his own actions. Silver lauds Marshall for "sentencing America's ugliest ever eruption of antisemitism to oblivion" (398) (a dubious claim), but the essential context goes unmentioned. Samuel Untermyer, who remained "of counsel" to the firm of Guggenheimer, Untermyer and Marshall, represented a client who was also suing Ford for libel. Marshall ignored his ethical duty to his firm's client, but he accepted half of the fee Ford paid Untermyer to settle Bernstein's suit. Since the correspondence that documents a furious argument between the two lawyers over this issue is also housed at the American Jewish Archives, it is curious that Silver chooses not to

acknowledge it. Had he done so, his understanding of Marshall would have greater depth and nuance.

Indeed, an unvarnished portrait, warts and all, should be the biographer's goal. Silver's conception of American Jewish identity is deeply bound up in Marshall. He situates Marshall as the heroic protagonist of American Jewish history, but that deprives readers of a realistic appraisal based on evidence that reveals Marshall from all angles. It does Marshall no favor to render him so one-sidedly. Marshall did not always act admirably. He favored the rights of the wealthy and the social elite. He dismissed people he thought wasted his time with petty quarrels, and he shamed people publicly when they crossed him. His failures were just as spectacular as his accomplishments. To improve on Handlin and Rosenstock, a Marshall biography must embrace that reality.

*Victoria Saker Woeste, a historian and legal scholar, is Research Professor at the American Bar Foundation in Chicago. Her areas of interest include constitutional law, political economy, and the civil rights movement. She is the author of Henry Ford's War on Jews and the Legal Battle Against Hate Speech (2012).*