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Dana Herman

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ARTICLES

Zionism and American Jewish Relief Efforts in Palestine During World War I

Caitlin Carenen

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World War I created an opportunity for Zionists to establish their hold on Palestine, in part through the relief efforts of American Jewish aid organizations. While successfully assisting the Jews of Palestine during the war, the differing goals and methods of relief distribution practiced by American aid organizations created tensions between Zionist and non-Zionist American Jews, and among Jews in Palestine. These tensions left, in the wake of the war, a more complicated legacy than previously assumed. This paper suggests that while Zionism was ultimately strengthened by the fundraising efforts of American Jews during World War I, these conflicts over humanitarian relief and political Zionism made this anything but a foregone conclusion.

Linked by Letters: A Doctor with the American Expeditionary Forces and His Chicago Family, A Jewish World War I Story

Ava F. Kahn

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This article explores the correspondence between the Cincinnati-born Dr. Jacob V. Kahn, a lieutenant serving in the AEF, and his family in Chicago. The letters highlight Kahn’s commitment to Jewish family life, personal relationships, and the medical profession. They tell more about his priorities and transformation than about the war itself; the
letters reflect what Kahn wanted his audience to believe, not always the reality of the situation. They show progression from writing about the solely personal to also writing about relationships with the men with whom he served. For Kahn, like many other ethnic soldiers, these transformations became most evident in their intense patriotism. The letters are powerful physical reminders of the strong link between a man in uniform and his family.

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Jacob R. Marcus, First Ohio Infantry, 1918.
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)
To Our Readers…

No doubt they'll soon get well; the shock and strain
Have caused their stammering, disconnected talk.
Of course they're 'longing to go out again,'—
These boys with old, scared faces, learning to walk.
They'll soon forget their haunted nights; their cowed
Subjection to the ghosts of friends who died,—
Their dreams that drip with murder; and they'll be proud
Of glorious war that shatter'd all their pride…
Men who went out to battle, grim and glad;
Children, with eyes that hate you, broken and mad.

The English poet Siegfried Sassoon (1886–1967) composed “Survivors” in 1918 while he was a patient at Craiglockhart, a psychiatric hospital used to treat British officers who were victims of shell shock during World War I. A few years ago, when my husband and I were attending a conference in Scotland, I was able to visit the building in Edinburgh, which now stands on the campus of Napier University. I was struck by how the site felt connected to the Great War even though no battle ever took place on Scottish soil. Indeed, hospitals served as liminal sites between the home front and the battlefront. “The realities of war were literally brought home to the British people in the form of crippled and maimed soldiers. As they filled up the country’s overcrowded hospitals, the truly global scale of the Great War became all too apparent.”

With America remaining neutral until 1917 and the battles occurring thousands of miles away on European soil, the war was removed from daily life and physical reality for many Americans. As Hasia Diner writes: “The Atlantic provided Americans with a safe space, removed from the ravages of the conflict.” Without sites linking the battlefront

to the home front—although one could argue training camps were one such example—how did the American experience of the war differ from the European one? Beyond media sources and newsprint culture, how did people learn about and react to what was going on overseas? For our interests, specifically, how did American Jews learn about and react to the war in all of its manifestations? How did it influence their own wartime experience back home?

While there is a sizable amount of scholarly literature vis-à-vis American society and World War I, certainly more can be done to help us answer these questions and offer connections between the two fronts, particularly when it comes to the war and the American Jewish community. Paul Berger rightly stated in his 2014 article: “The war was a defining moment that changed American Jewish identity, power, and values, but it has been overshadowed by the catastrophe of World War II.” As Jonathan Karp and Marsha Rozenblit summarized in their new edited volume: “It sometimes seems that World War I is weighted with such immense significance, and its effects are so far-reaching and long-lasting, that it cannot also easily be seen as a relatively self-contained episode in its own right.” Fleshing out the American Jewish story(ies)


within this “self-contained episode” will add to the existing historiography and to our knowledge of the war’s lasting impact.

Providing overseas relief through avenues such as the newly established American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) is often mentioned as a way the war impacted American Jewish communal and philanthropic life beginning in 1914: “Capitalists and socialists, Reform rabbis and Orthodox ones, Jews of widely different backgrounds and persuasions, including three women, all sat together at the Joint’s meetings, reaching most decisions by consensus and others by majority vote.” In her article in this issue of the journal, Caitlin Carenen uses this as her jumping-off point to discuss the tension between humanitarian aid and political Zionism among the Zionist and non-Zionist leaders of the relief program as it related to the suffering Jews of the Yishuv. She shows how clashes and controversies among the leaders in New York had a direct impact on Jews thousands of miles away in Palestine.

Relief was not provided solely at the national or international level, though. Activities on the local level—both inside and outside of the New York metropolis—need also be examined. For example, in the June 1916 issue of The Hebrew Union College Monthly, published by the students of the Reform seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio, a statement was issued affirming that “we have not forgotten our suffering brothers and sisters in the war zones of the Old World.” The students implemented a voluntary tax that went into a relief fund for Jewish war sufferers. More than $80 had already been raised. One can surmise that these Jewish students were not the only ones responding in this way to news from overseas.

Other means of gauging the reaction to war at the local level should also be explored. Letters back and forth from relatives—both civilians

7 Jonathan D. Sarna, American Judaism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 211.
8 Hebrew Union College Monthly II, no. 9 (June 1916): 325.
9 Providing relief to Jews overseas was one of the topics covered by numerous rabbis in their sermons. See, for example, the presidential address delivered by Rabbi Moses Gries to the CCAR on 29 June 1915, MS 53, box 4, folder 9, AJA. Marc Saperstein, “American Jewish Preaching on the First World War: Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf,” European Judaism 48, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 129–141. Also, his Jewish Preaching in Times of War, 1800–2001 (Oxford, England and Portland, OR: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2008).
and soldiers—serve as an important archival link between America and war‑torn Europe. Ava F. Kahn provides us with such a link through an analysis of twenty‑five handwritten letters by her great uncle, Dr. Jacob V. Kahn, and sent to his sister, sister‑in‑law, and niece while he was in the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) Medical Corps from May 1918 to April 1919. As she correctly argues, the letters written by this native‑born American Jewish soldier and the relatives’ letters back to him help us “reach both a fuller understanding of the men, the events they experienced, and dynamics of Jewish family life.” While letters should not be used as the only source for historical reconstruction, they can prove insightful in a number of different ways and should not be dismissed altogether.

There is no doubt that World War I—or what Rabbi Stephen S. Wise called “the war for the liberation of humanity”—had a lasting impact on those who lived through it and for those who came after, even one hundred years later. While the war may not be on the cultural radar of most people today, the role of the historian is, in part, to teach us about our collective past and to impart lessons from it—lest we forget.

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Managing Editor
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10 According to Julian Leavitt of the American Jewish Committee, who assembled and published Jewish war statistics in 1919–1920, the medical corps constituted 8 percent of the total army and 9 percent of the Jewish total. See Julian Leavitt, “American Jews in the World War,” American Jewish Year Book 21 (1919): 147. This statistic is repeated in Jews in the World War: A Study in Jewish Patriotism and Heroism (New York: Jewish War Veterans, 1941).

11 Letters from American Jewish soldiers who fought in World War II were collected and published by Isaac E. Rontch under the title, Jewish Youth at War: Letters from American Soldiers (New York: Marstin Press, 1945). No comparable volume exists, as far as I am aware, for American Jewish soldiers during WWI.


13 Stephen S. Wise to Richard Gottheil, 29 March 1917, MS‑127, box 2, folder 3, AJA.
Zionism and American Jewish Relief Efforts in Palestine During World War I

Caitlin Carenen

When the Ottoman Empire officially joined World War I on 30 October 1914, it had already ordered an end to the historic capitulations that had granted privileges to foreigners living in Ottoman lands.¹ The end of capitulations immediately endangered the non-Ottoman Jews living in Palestine. Non-citizens would soon be forced to renounce their previous citizenships and take an oath of loyalty to the Ottoman government and likely face conscription, or leave Palestine. The community of Jews in Palestine, albeit statistically small, held enormous importance to Zionists. Since 1896, when Theodore Herzl published The Jewish State and launched the modern Zionist movement, the growing Jewish community in Palestine had taken on profound symbolic importance. Now, cut off from nearly all sources of income due to trade restrictions imposed by the Ottoman authorities, the Jewish community appeared desperately vulnerable. American Jews, alerted to the problems the Palestinian Jews faced by the ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, organized a massive relief drive in 1914 to assist Jews suffering from the effects of World War I.

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee—the JDC—was formed from three different organizations, and it immediately allocated

¹ The capitulations that had been granted to foreigners living in Ottoman lands began with France in 1536 and allowed non-Muslims living in the Ottoman Empire to enjoy extraterritorial legal status, exempting them from Ottoman justice and conscription. They also protected foreigners’ property rights. By September of 1914, the “hated capitulations” had mainly been abolished, with the last draft exemptions abolished in April of 1915.
some funds to aid Jews in Palestine.\textsuperscript{2} Intended to assist all Jews in belligerent hands, it had sent over $35 million of relief aid to Palestine by the war’s conclusion in 1918.\textsuperscript{3} The JDC was composed of both Zionists

\begin{figure}
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\caption{Painting of Executive of JDC in 1918 by Geza Fischer, 1929. (Courtesy American Jewish Archives)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{2} The three organizations that made up the JDC included the Central Committee for the Relief of Jews, the American Jewish Relief Committee, and People’s Relief Committee. Each group represented a different constituent among American Jews—the Central Committee for the Relief of Jews was established by the Union of Orthodox Congregations in October of 1914; the American Jewish Relief Committee was also established in 1914 and dominated by the elite leaders of the American Jewish Committee; and the socialist-oriented People’s Relief Committee was established in 1915.

\textsuperscript{3} Much has been written about the history of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which is outside the direct focus of this article. For a history of its early years, see Joseph C. Hyman, “Twenty-Five Years of American Aid to Jews Overseas: A Record of the Joint Distribution Committee,” \textit{American Jewish Yearbook} 41 (1939); and Morris Engleman, \textit{Four Years of Relief and War Work by the Jews of America, 1914–1918} (New York: The Schoen Printing Company, 1918). For a comprehensive general history of the JDC, see Mark Rosen, \textit{Mission, Meaning, and Money: How the Joint Distribution Committee Became a Fundraising
and non-Zionists, who often used Zionist infrastructure and sometimes cooperated in aid distribution during the war. The enormous amount of aid ultimately strengthened, and in some cases saved, the community.\(^4\) Moreover, it reinforced Zionism’s hold on the region while simultaneously introducing a sustained American Jewish interest in the welfare of the Jews of Palestine. By the war’s end, American Jewish support for Palestinian Jews suffering from the war catalyzed a significant growing support for political Zionism among American Jews.\(^5\)

Yet, this support deserves further scrutiny, especially within the context of the Jews of Palestine and the growing tensions between Zionists and non-Zionists in the United States. World War I is generally ignored in the comprehensive studies of Jewish history, as the editors of a recent volume on the subject note. Studies of the Jewish experience in the war have tended to be “territoriality” studies.\(^6\) While this article focuses on the territory of Palestine, it intentionally widens the lens of analysis to include the Jews of the Yishuv and American Jewish leaders. Within that scope, it narrows the examination to a particular group of American Jewish leaders who were either hostile or ambivalent to, or skeptical of, political Zionism. This group, small in number yet significant in influence, has often been relegated to the dustbins of historical analysis in

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\(^4\) See for example, Michal Ben Ya’akov, “Women and the War: The Social and Economic Impact of World War I on Jewish Women in the Traditional Holy Cities of Palestine,” in *World War I and the Jews: Conflict and Transformation in Europe, the Middle East, and America*, ed. Jonathan Karp and Marsha Rozenblit (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2017), 222–241. Ben Ya’akov argues that the relief aid from the JDC provided nearly the only way to prevent mass starvation during the First World War. Even so, the mortality rate among the Yishuv, particularly within the less well-connected Sephardim and Mizrachi Jewish communities, remained astonishingly high, 227.


\(^6\) Karp and Rozenblit, eds., *World War I and the Jews.*
the context of the Jews of Palestine during World War I. Perhaps the obvious reason for this is that their hesitancy toward, or rejection of, political Zionism has been eclipsed by the establishment of the State of Israel and American Jewry’s overwhelming support for Zionism. This study, then, examines archival material that has been analyzed less by historians of Zionism and World War I Palestine; it intentionally does not address the well-studied Zionist perspective (including figures such as Louis D. Brandeis and Stephen S. Wise). Moreover, this article does not address divisions within the American Jewish community in the context of the rise of Zionism and the One-Hundred Percent American atmosphere of World War I, nor does it serve as a study of non-Zionist American Jewish leaders. Instead, this article specifically examines


8 See Caitlin Carenen, “Complicating the Zionist Narrative in America: Jacob Schiff and the Struggle over Relief Aid in World War I,” *American Jewish History* 101, no. 4 (October 2017): 441–463. This article focuses on the conflict within American Jewish leadership over relief aid and Zionism during World War I. It looks especially at JDC leader Jacob Schiff’s reluctance to support political Zionism and his frustration with what he perceived to be the aggressiveness of the Zionist agenda in distributing relief aid, particularly in Palestine. The article also focuses on the concerns of American Jewish leaders over their perceived patriotism by non-Jews during a time of One Hundred Percent Americanism. For more scholarship on non-Zionist American Jewish leaders, see also Naomi Cohen, *Jacob H. Schiff: A Study in American Jewish Leadership* (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 1999); Sonja P. Wentling “Herbert Hoover and American Jewish Non-Zionists, 1917–1928,” *American
tension between American Zionists—notably the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs (PEC)—and non-Zionists within the JDC over the distribution of aid for the Yishuv during the war. Its purpose is to intentionally complicate a narrative about American Jewish support for the Jews in Palestine during World War I—a narrative previously claimed by Zionists. This article suggests that while Zionism was ultimately strengthened by the fundraising efforts of American Jews during World War I, tension between humanitarian relief and political Zionism did not make this a foregone conclusion for either Jews of the Yishuv or American Jews. While World War I relief efforts offered the opportunity for Zionists to tighten their hold on Palestine, clumsy relief distribution and political tension in the United States over the adoption of Zionist principles in relief aid reveal a serious lack of unity of purpose. Historian Abigail Jacobsen has accurately argued that, ultimately, relief aid efforts by American Jews to alleviate the suffering of Jews strengthened Zionism in Palestine, both during and immediately after the war. Certainly strengthening Jewish presence in Palestine

9 The Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs was started after the World Zionist headquarters in Berlin became a part of the belligerent nations of World War I. American Zionist leaders wanted to maintain the international aspect of the agency and so created the PEC, based in New York for the duration of the war. Louis D. Brandeis served as the PEC’s first President and their offices were housed in Nathan Straus’s downtown New York City office. Eliyahu Z’ev (E.Z. or E.W.) Lewin-Epstein was the PEC’s treasurer.

10 William M. Mathew, “War-Time Contingency and the Balfour Declaration of 1917: An Improbable Regression,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 40, no. 2 (Winter 2011): 26–42. Mathew argues that British support for the Balfour Declaration was not inevitable. This paper makes a similar argument by stressing the complicated nature and resulting tensions of Jewish relief efforts in Palestine.

could not but strengthen the Zionist claims to the area immediately preceding, and after, the Balfour Declaration of November 1917 that declared British support for the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish homeland. The greater the number of Jews, and the stronger their community, the more assertive Zionism’s claim to the region. But when we closely examine the efforts of American Jews to help Jews in Palestine during the war, a more complicated narrative emerges—one that reveals mismanagement, unsuccessful business ventures, infighting among the Yishuv and American Jews, and frustration from non-Zionists regarding Zionist methods.

Assisting suffering Jews during the war often stemmed from humanitarian rather than political impulses. Far from being the dominant persuasion among American Jewry, Zionism remained the choice of a minority of Jews (albeit a powerful minority). While Zionism gained a foothold in Eastern Europe after the founding of the World Zionist Organization, American Jews did not immediately embrace this secular Jewish nationalism. In fact, within the leadership of the JDC, serious divisions arose between the Zionists and non-Zionists over the methods of aid distribution.\(^{12}\)

While it is undeniable that American Jewish relief efforts ultimately helped the Jews of Palestine, the argument that these efforts unvaryingly strengthened Zionism belies a more complex picture. The Jews of Palestine often found themselves caught between Zionist and non-Zionist ideologies, as well as the Ashkenazim, Mizrahi and Sephardim communities. The result of these struggles delayed the support of prominent American Jewish leaders for the Zionist agenda and left an untidy legacy in its wake. One of the leaders of American Jewry and a skeptic of

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\(^{12}\) Other factors complicated the relationship between Zionists and non-Zionists, including the push within the United States for a more democratic organization to represent the new wave of Jewish immigrants. This push for a Jewish congress challenged the existing American Jewish hierarchy, many of whom were non-Zionists. Moreover, the proposed congress included a pro-Zionist platform. The literature on this topic is extensive. See n. 7 above.
political Zionism, Jacob Schiff, of Kuhn, Loeb and Company, a prominent New York investment firm, wrote a letter in 1916 to Judah Magnes, member of the JDC and a Zionist, in which he confessed, “I am very much afraid that the Zionists themselves have, through their selfish and ill‑advised course throughout [the war,] worked great harm to the cause of our people in Palestine, and perhaps also elsewhere. The future will show whether or not this fear on my part is justified.” 13 Fear that the exclusionary policies of the Zionists in Palestine would damage the cause of Jewish humanitarian relief efforts worldwide and harm the creation of a cultural and spiritual center for Jews in Palestine worried many Jewish leaders and signaled tension between Jewish rights and human rights.

Relief for Jews in Palestine

The First Aliyah to Palestine, occurring between 1882 and 1903, involved mainly Eastern European Jews fleeing pogroms. Their numbers were not large and the experiment was not particularly successful, even after the great boost to the Zionist movement that came from Theodore Herzl’s publication of *The Jewish State* in 1896 and the following year’s first World Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland. The Second Aliyah began in 1904 with a different kind of immigrant community—mainly socialists dedicated to establishing a homeland in Palestine rather than simply fleeing persecution in their former homelands. The immigrants of the Second Aliyah established the first kibbutz in 1909, for example. This second, more politically and militantly dedicated group of Zionists established themselves more successfully than the first group, although their numbers were still small. The eruption of World War I temporarily halted this second immigration wave, and it would not resume until the beginning of 1919 with the Third Aliyah.

Establishing the number of Jews living in Palestine at the outbreak of the war is difficult. Historian Abigail Jacobson estimates that on the eve of the war, “the population of Palestine is roughly estimated at between 689,000

13 Letter from Jacob Schiff to Judah Magnes, 23 February 1916, Jacob Schiff Papers, MS 456, box 445, folder 12, Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio (hereafter AJA). Louis Marshall was Magnes’ brother‑in‑law as he was married to Beatrice Lowenstein, the sister of Louis Marshall’s wife.
and 800,000 people.” What makes this estimate particularly vague is that, as she notes, “the Ottoman census only counted Ottoman subjects, Jews, Muslims and Christians alike, and not the foreign subjects who resided in Palestine.”14 Many Jews living in Palestine were not Ottoman subjects. Once the war began, these Jews grew increasingly vulnerable. Michal Ben Ya’akov has noted that the war situation, combined with plague, disease, locusts, the drying up of currency, and conscriptions, punished the Yishuv particularly hard, and the Sephardic and Mizrahi community most of all.15

As early as October 1914, attempts to figure out the needs of the Jewish community in Palestine revealed a dire situation—desperate need for food and money and limited means to get resources where they were most needed. On 18 August 1914, Otis Glazebrook, the American consul in Jerusalem, sent an urgent telegram to the American Embassy in Constantinople, outlining the desperate situation. Glazebrook’s cable reported that military authorities had confiscated supplies from the consular’s office, despite protests, and had stationed sixteen thousand troops in the area. This had created a “military terrorism” to which the American Jewish community needed to respond with “financial aid and food supplies.”16 The United States, through the efforts of Glazebrook and Morgenthau, was considered a non-belligerent until it joined the war against the Entente Powers in 1917 and thus was allowed to operate relief aid in Palestine; however, distributing the aid remained complicated. In examining war relief in Palestine, Jaclyn Granick has pointed out that relief aid to Palestine worked differently than relief aid to Europe. Money, food, and medicine could be sent directly to Palestine with the

14 Jacobson, From Empire to Empire, 3.
15 Ben Ya’akov notes that “Ashkenazic Jews, most of whom had European protection, were affected more than Sephardim, who were usually Ottoman subjects, but Sephardim also suffered expulsion, since many North African Jews had French or English protection, and Bukharans and others were Russian subjects.” She adds, “Although the varying definitions and categories in the sources render it difficult to consistently differentiate between sub-groups of Sephardic and Oriental (Mizrahi) Jews, the Yemenite and Moroccan Jews seem to have suffered the most.” See “Women and the War,” 226–227.
16 Telegram from Otis Glazebrook to American Embassy in Constantinople, 18 August 1914, RG 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Jerusalem, Palestine, Volume 68, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
cooperation of the U.S. Navy, the lifting of blockades by French and British governments, and the cooperation of the U.S. State Department. Money could be transferred via Constantinople and through European banks to the Zionist Anglo-Palestine bank (which was open sporadically during the war). Moreover, relief aid came from the JDC as well as individual families, whose remittances were “tracked by a system of receipts” managed by the JDC and Glazebrook. Granick argues that as a result of the myriad avenues of relief for Palestine, it developed a “hybrid relief” structure at odds with the “progressive, institutional, corporate American style” familiar to the JDC’s leadership. As the years progressed, this “hybrid method” combined with Zionist and non-Zionist tensions, complicating the relief efforts in Palestine.

As early as December 1914, the American Red Cross contacted Felix Warburg, treasurer of the newly minted American Jewish Relief Committee, to transmit an important cable. The 24 November 1914 cable declared: “Need of provisions very pressing. Many shall suffer therefrom. It is possible to ask help from America to send ship full of all sorts of provisions direct to Jaffa for distribution among needy people without distinction of religion nationality.” Clearly, the Red Cross believed that aid should be to all Palestinians, not only Jews. The JDC would challenge such an ecumenical approach as the war progressed.

By the end of 1914, rail service in Palestine proved unreliable and infrequent, and Turkish authorities, over the protests of Glazebrook and the Consulate Office in Jerusalem, routinely confiscated the already-meager existing supplies. To give members of the JDC a sense of the need and logistical obstacles they faced, Magnes asked fellow Zionist Samuel Pewsner, who had just come from Palestine, to give a report of the conditions in November 1914. Pewsner reported

18 Letter from Red Cross Chairman George Davis to Felix Warburg, 7 December 1914, Louis Marshall Papers, MS 359, box 40, folder 4, AJA.
19 Samuel Joseph Pewsner (1878–1930) was an engineer from Russia who settled in Haifa. He was the youngest delegate at the First Zionist Congress. See Raphael Patai, ed., Encyclopedia of Zionism and Israel (New York: Herzl Press/McGraw-Hill, 1971), 884.
to Magnes that, “Even before my leaving, the Government had forbidden the shipment of food from Galilee to Judea, first because they feared that the population would remain without foodstuffs in Galilee proper, and, second, because she was concentrating her mobilized forces in that section and wanted to have the wheat available for her forces, if necessary.” In fact, mobilization of material and men throughout the war would prove problematic for Ottoman military officials. Privileging wheat supplies for soldiers in a time of war, therefore, would not be surprising, but the degree of poverty that resulted from food acquisitions proved devastating to the remaining populations. Pewsner’s report noted that if whatever wheat was available was not obtained immediately, “after a short while, it will be physically impossible to obtain any more.” Moreover, other supplies—including rice, sugar, and potatoes, as well as non-food items such as medical supplies, petroleum, and currency—were desperately needed “because since the beginning of the war nothing of this nature has been imported and Palestine does not produce any of these.” Pewsner noted that it would be absolutely necessary to get money to individuals to buy whatever food was available “to sustain themselves for the next two months, if only with bread and water, so as to save them from actual starvation.” It was equally important, he noted, “to provide immediately for sending a large shipment of all kinds of provisions including flour and wheat, to Palestine in order to save 100,000 souls from starvation, after the two months’ supply will have been consumed.” It was clear to Pewsner, only a few months into the war, that the Jewish community in Palestine faced imminent hardship, if not ruin. Beyond observer reports, though, the letters of residents of Palestine reached their families in America with equally desperate accounts of the situation, accounts confirmed by Glazebrook himself.

20 Letter to Judah Magnes from Samuel Pewsner, 11 December 1914, Felix Warburg Papers, MS 457, box 166, folder 9, AJA.
21 Ibid.
22 Telegram from Otis Glazebrook to embassy in Constantinople, 14 September 1914, RG 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Jerusalem, Palestine, Volume 68, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
When Glazebrook received the first $50,000 in relief funds from the American Jewish Committee via Morgenthau, he cabled to Morgenthau that the “presume[d] contribution of fifty thousand dollars is for feeding the poor[.] Request your confirmation[.] Cannot imagine any other application of funds at present[.]” Glazebrook conveyed the seriousness of the situation to Morgenthau. The governor of Palestine had “announced abolition of capitulation on October first. Forty thousand Jerusalem Jews [are] in desperate conditions[.] Institutions in dire necessity some closing.” Glazebrook noted that while some flour was available to buy, most Jews had “purchased exemption” from serving in the Ottoman military and had no funds with which to buy food. Morgenthau confirmed that the money was “intended to assist colonists and families of mobilized bread-winners.” He further inquired as to the seriousness of the conditions of the poor, the closing of institutions, and food scarcity. Glazebrook’s reply in late September offered a prioritization of distribution aid. He argued for granting loans for “deserving institutions” to avoid closures and starvation, creating demand for Palestinian products to generate income for Jewish residents cut off from other markets (especially for orange production), operating soup kitchens for the poorest residents, selling food staples at cost, and finding public employment for laborers. By the end of October, the American Jewish Relief Fund had established a committee of three men in Palestine to oversee the distribution of the first $50,000 and all future distributions. The group consisted of Dr. Arthur Ruppin of Jaffa, Mr. Aaron Aaronsohn of Haifa, and Mr. Ephraim Cohn-Reiss of Jerusalem. They were supervised by Maurice Wertheim, Morgenthau’s son-in-law.

23 Telegram from Otis Glazebrook to embassy in Constantinople, 11 September 1914, RG 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Jerusalem, Palestine, Volume 68, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
24 Telegram from Henry Morgenthau to American Consul in Jerusalem, 13 September 1914, RG 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Jerusalem, Palestine, Volume 68, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
25 Telegram from American Consulate, Jerusalem, to American Embassy in Constantinople, 28 September 1914, RG 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Jerusalem, Palestine, Volume 68, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
26 Arthur Ruppin (1876–1943) was a famous Zionist and organizer of agricultural settlement in Palestine who was expelled from Palestine in 1916 by Ahmed Jamal Pasha, key...
Even before the JDC had orchestrated its first fundraising campaign, individuals contacted the newly formed executive board members in an effort to get relief to family members in Palestine. For example, one woman wrote to the executive board on 10 November 1914: “Kindly let me know immediately whether I can send some money through your respective National Relief Committee to my brother, who lives in Palestine and who is under very critical circumstances. I wouldn’t have troubled you, but the Post Office wouldn’t do it for us.” As donors sent money for relief in Palestine, getting the funds there proved complicated. American Jews who tried to use the JDC as a conduit for family members in Palestine to receive funds discovered that once Turkey joined the war, individual-to-individual payments became increasingly difficult; Glazebrook frequently served as a channel for payments from worried family members in the United States to relatives in Palestine. The JDC set up a transmission bureau in Palestine to “directly transmit moneys to their wives, parents, brothers, sisters, and other relatives,” thus allowing Glazebrook an apparatus through which to collect, solicit, and distribute funds to Jews in Palestine. By the war’s end, the JDC had transmitted over $100,000 from private individuals through the bureau.

In hundreds of cases, Glazebrook wrote to family members in the United States asking for money on behalf of stricken family in Palestine, sometimes admonishing family members for their neglect of suffering


27 Letter to Felix Warburg from Mrs. H. Adelstein, 10 November 1914, Felix Warburg Papers, MS 457, box 165, folder 6, AJA.
28 Letter to Felix Warburg from Mr. B. Goldberger, 9 November 1914, Felix Warburg Papers, MS 457, box 165, folder 6, AJA.
30 Ibid., 227.
relatives. He often directed Americans to send their funds for relief of family members through the Central Committee for the Relief of Jews. Conversely, Albert Lucas, notable leader of the Orthodox Jewish community in New York city (and former secretary of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations in America), now acting as the executive secretary for the Central Relief Committee, consistently wrote to Glazebrook during the war to confirm relief funds sent from Americans to their families and to inquire after the well-being of others in Palestine. Lucas reminded Glazebrook to “be kind enough to advise us as promptly as possible when the payments are made to the various payees. You will appreciate that their relatives here are extremely anxious to know that their remittances have come to the hands of those for whom they are intended.” No doubt family members in the United States, receiving letters that their loved ones were starving, awaited relief of their own. Letters included pleas to fund soup kitchens in Jerusalem to alleviate the immediate needs of starving Jews. “Already these kitchens have been

31 Letter from Otis Glazebrook to Samuel Ashkenazi, 11 July 1916, RG 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Jerusalem, Palestine, Volume 74, Part II, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
compelled to reduce their relief to one meal a day, and unless there shall come from America immediate help, we will be compelled, in two or three weeks[,] to close them,” declared one Jerusalem resident.  

Lucas informed Glazebrook that the Central Committee’s offices in New York were inundated with daily requests about the welfare of family members in Palestine. Felix Warburg, on behalf of the JDC, also requested that Glazebrook help locate missing family members. Much of Glazebrook’s consular records during the war centered on finding missing family members, paying them sums delivered through the JDC, and accounting for these payments. Sometimes the news was grim. For example, in responding to one of Warburg’s requests for the update on a family in Jerusalem, Glazebrook reported that “the two youngest children have been placed in the Diskin orphanage while the oldest child Joseph, roams around and lives as best he can.” Glazebrook encouraged Warburg to send money from the family in the United States to support these children.

In an April 1916 letter to Glazebrook, despite their differing approaches and recognizing Glazebrook’s dedication to helping Palestinian Jews, Lucas seemed to acknowledge the enormous workload Glazebrook faced as the consular in a belligerent region. He concluded the letter by thanking Glazebrook for his “self-sacrificing assistance to our poor co-religionists.” Glazebrook’s work also garnered the appreciation of Morgenthau, whose commitment to the survival of the Jewish community in Palestine depended, in part, on Glazebrook’s efforts to secure the Jewish colonies and communities. After the war began, Morgenthau

32 Letter from Boris Scharz to American Jewish Relief Committee, 15 November 1914, Louis Marshall Papers, MS 359, box 40, folder 4, AJA.
33 Letter from Felix Warburg to Otis Glazebrook, 11 May 1916, RG 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Jerusalem, Palestine, Volume 74, Part II, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
34 Letter from Otis Glazebrook to Felix Warburg, 4 August 1916, RG 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Jerusalem, Palestine, Volume 74, Part II, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
35 Letter from Albert Lucas to Otis Glazebrook, 21 April 1916, RG 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Jerusalem, Palestine, Volume 74, Part II, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
thanked Glazebrook for his “splendid work” on “behalf of the Jews and Jewish cause in Jerusalem.” It was clear to Morgenthau that Glazebrook was “putting [his] full heart into the work.”

Both Glazebrook and Morgenthau worked tirelessly on behalf of the Jews in Palestine, and their motivation was clear: Their efforts did not stem from support of the Zionist agenda, but from humanitarian concern for those suffering in the region.

“The Ripe and Perfect Jaffa Orange”: Financial Support of Jewish Citrus Farmers

By November 1914, members of the American Jewish Relief Committee and the PEC had received various testimonies, through both official and unofficial channels, about the degree of hardship the Jews in Palestine faced. Relief was needed immediately, although reports about what was most needed varied. On 29 September 1914 Morgenthau telegraphed Louis Marshall of the American Jewish Relief Committee to let him know that the most immediate problems included lack of money, interrupted shipping, a lack of a market, and devastated economy that pushed the poor to the edge of starvation. He added, “Colonies not threatened with destruction. Colonists personally need little immediate assistance, their main problem find new markets.” Morgenthau proposed relief aid concentrating on “soup kitchens for the very poor; food stores selling staples at cost, loan institutions lending on security, public works where private labor impossible, and deserving institutions.” He concluded with a plea to Marshall, Jacob Schiff, and Nathan Straus (Jewish philanthropist and co-owner of the Macy’s Department store) to “raise further funds.”

The PEC sent a copy of an equally urgent telegram to the members of the JDC in an effort to coordinate relief efforts. Consensus seemed to be that the most pressing need, in addition to food, was to establish new markets to sell Jewish products.

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36 Letter from the American Embassy in Constantinople to Otis Glazebrook, 27 November 1914, RG 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Jerusalem, Palestine, Volume 68, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
37 Telegram from Morgenthau to Louis Marshall, 29 September 1914, Louis Marshall Papers, MS 359, box 40, folder 5, AJA.
Assisting the colonies with opening new markets became part of the relief aid to Palestine. In an 11 December 1914 letter to Magnes, Pewsner offered a plan to assist Jews in Palestine and support the Zionist endeavor simultaneously. The plan called for procuring neutral ships, which would bring relief aid into Palestine, distribute it to the needy, and then take shipments of Jaffa oranges, farmed by Zionist communities, back to New York for sale. “Whatever proceeds there are from the sale of oranges,” Pewsner wrote to Magnes, “will all go for the welfare of the Jewish planters of Palestine, which will in turn ease the situation of the general population in Palestine.”

In this instance, Pewsner’s Zionism via his support for the Jewish orange farmers could be interpreted as general benevolence to all Palestinians—their well-being would help to ensure the well-being of all (a theme later developed by American Zionists regarding the well-being of Palestinians living within a Jewish state). However, it is clear that Pewsner’s purpose remained primarily to assist Jews. Other Zionists were not sure that importing Jaffa oranges would offer much profit to American investors or the growers due to the condition of the fruit upon arrival and the novelty of the fruit’s origination but nonetheless urged a trial shipment, if for nothing else than as an act of charity.

In considering the orange proposition, Pewsner noted to fellow Zionist Maurice Wertheim, of the Palestine Loan Committee and investment banker from New York, that, “It seems to me, therefore, in view of the terrible situation now existing in Palestine and what the establishment of a market for oranges in America means to the planters of Palestine, that we ought not to shrink [from this investment], because a financial loss may be incurred, financial in the commercial sense only.”

In a 16 November 1914 letter to Louis Marshall, Nathan Straus explained that the likelihood of profits was so low as to not make the experiment worth his while. Yet, as the letter was about to go to post, he added a postscript that noted, “I am just informed by Mr.

38 Letter to Judah Magnes from S. Pewsner, 11 December 1914, Felix Warburg Papers, MS 457, box 166, folder 9, AJA.
39 Letter to Judah Magnes from Maurice Wertheim, 12 December 1914, Felix Warburg Papers, MS 457, box 166, folder 9, AJA.
40 Ibid.
Perlstein, Adm. Secretary of the Zion Provisional Committee, who are occupying my office, that a Mr. Pewsner of Caiffa [sic] is on his way to America bearing letters from Ambassador Morgenthau to several people in this country requesting them to assist in marketing the orange crop of Palestine.”

Straus decided to assist.

In his examination of Jewish citrus culture in Palestine during the Mandate period, historian Nahum Karlinsky argued that citrus, while a symbol of early Zionism, owed its success more to private capital than collective socialist efforts of the Second Aliyah. While Karlinsky’s focus is primarily on the Mandate years, early efforts to market citrus to assist the Yishuv also fit this interpretation. It perhaps adds to the irony, in fact, that some of the financial sponsors of this venture were either indifferent or hostile to political Zionism. By the end of 1914, Zionists and non-Zionists alike moved forward a plan to bring Jaffa oranges to American markets, despite the economic risks. Such support came from the non-Zionist Schiff, whom Pewsner assured that if he offered $5,000 in unsecured loans to ship the oranges (as had, apparently, Baron Rothschild), a “sure deal goes through saving Palestine from ruin.” In reporting on the first (unsuccessful) import of oranges, E.W. Lewin-Epstein, of both the Carmel Wine Company and the PEC, and Pewsner informed their investors that “in our opinion, it would be perfectly permissible, for the first few years at least, to utilize, in behalf of the Palestinian orange industry, the strong Palestinian sentiment prevailing among our co-religionists, within reasonable limits, of course, without taking undue advantage of anyone.” One should not, they argued, cut “out entirely the important factor of sentiment.” Besides, they reassured their investors, “that the ripe and perfect Jaffa orange is superior to all others in sweetness and aroma, is a well-known fact and is admitted even

41 Letter to Louis Marshall from Nathan Straus, 16 November 1914, Louis Marshall Papers, MS 359, box 40, folder 5, AJA.
43 “Palestinian Orange Crops,” Louis Marshall Papers, MS 359, box 40, folder 5, AJA.
44 Telegram from Samuel Pewsner to Jacob Schiff, 7 April 1915, Jacob Schiff Papers, MS 456, box 459, folder 18, AJA.
by American authorities.”45 Despite the perfection of the Jaffa orange, economic losses continued. Nonetheless, investors, inspired by the need of Palestinian Jewish farmers, continued financial support. For the remainder of the war until his death in 1920, Schiff helped to manage the import of Jaffa oranges on behalf of Zionist farmers working through the Jewish National Fund and the Jewish Colonial Trust.46 Committed to the success of the Jewish community in Palestine, despite his skepticism of political Zionism, Schiff believed that the orange growers constituted “an industry upon which, as you know best yourself, rests to no little degree the prosperity of Palestine. It is because of this … that I have consented to contribute toward the advance to the funds necessary to finance the handling of these orange shipments when they arrive here.”47 Like Glazebrook and Morgenthau’s efforts in relief aid, Schiff’s commitment stemmed from humanitarian, not Zionist impulses.

Expulsions

On 23 December 1914 an urgent telegram from Z.D. Levontin, who had served as the Director of the Jewish Colonial Trust in London and established the Anglo-Palestine Bank in Jaffa and Ze’ev Gluskin, founder of the Carmel Wine Co. (a company established to assist in developing the economy of the Yishuv) to Lewin-Epstein noted that the Ottoman authorities had begun expelling from Palestine Russian Jews who were not Ottoman subjects. According to the telegram, 686 men, women, and children were “expulsed unexpectedly” from Jaffa and were now in a steamer headed to Alexandria, Egypt, stripped of all valuables by the military authorities before departure. “We appeal to relief fund for

45 “Supplementary Report of the Palestine Orange Committee by E.W. Lewin-Epstein & Samuel Pewsner,” 4 March 1915, Jacob Schiff Papers, MS 456, box 459, folder 18, AJA.
46 Incorporated in London in 1899, the Jewish Colonial Trust (JCT) served as the financial core of the Zionist movement. Schiff was joined in this endeavor to assist the Palestine Orange Growers by Baron Edmund de Rothschild, Julius Rosewald, Samuel S. Fels, Adolph Lewisohn, and Daniel Guggenheim. Letter to Jacob Schiff from the law offices of Steinhardt and Goldman, 28 May 1915, Jacob Schiff Papers, MS 456, box 459, folder 18, AJA.
47 Letter from Jacob Schiff to Maurice Wertheim, 21 January 1915, Jacob Schiff Papers, MS 456, box 459, folder 18, AJA.
immediate help” Gluskin telegraphed, and asked for assistance from “high quarters” to help shield the Jews from “such atrocities.”\textsuperscript{48} Efforts by the Zionists to aid the Russian Jewish refugees from Palestine stemmed from their concern for the treatment of their co-religionists in general, as opposed to Russian Jews specifically, and included distributing food upon arrival in Alexandria and working with the local authorities to find work for the newly expelled. Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, in part prompted by the inquiries of the JDC, interceded with the Ottoman authorities on behalf of the remaining Russian Jews in Palestine. According to Bryan, the authorities promised not to expel them provided they accept Ottoman citizenship and pay the naturalization fees demanded by the government—a problem for Jewish nationalist interests in Palestine as it could complicate future citizenship should so many potential Zionists adopt Ottoman citizenship.\textsuperscript{49} By 1915, the number of Jews expelled from Palestine who had fled to Alexandria grew to six thousand.\textsuperscript{50}

Expulsions continued as the war progressed. For the next year, the JDC and the PEC focused on helping displaced Jews through neutral third parties—including Swedish and Swiss organizations and the Red Cross—in Palestine.\textsuperscript{51} Despite the cooperation, however, the additional expulsion of hundreds of Jews from Jaffa and Jerusalem in May 1917 created another issue of tension between the relief agencies. The JDC accused the Zionist organizations of using the expulsion to justify sending more money to bolster the Zionist agenda through support of the Zionist community; of sensationalizing the event beyond the facts (Zionists claimed over 12,000 had been expelled); and of sending

\textsuperscript{48} Telegram from Z.D. Levontin and Ze’ev Gluskin of the Carmel Wine, Co., 23 December 1914, Louis Marshall Papers, MS 359, box 40, folder 4, AJA.

\textsuperscript{49} Letter to Louis Marshall from W.J. Bryan, 28 December 1914, Louis Marshall Papers, MS 359, box 40, folder 4, AJA.

\textsuperscript{50} “Bulletin #1,” The American Jewish Relief Committee, February 1915, Felix Warburg Papers, MS 457, box 166, folder 27, AJA.

\textsuperscript{51} Letter to the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs from Second Assistant Secretary of State Alvey A. Alvee, 12 June 1917, Louis Marshall Papers, MS 359, box 49, folder 8, AJA.
funds from the JDC to Palestine without accurately accounting for those funds or reporting on conditions. Lucas sent a letter to Dr. Stephen S. Wise and Julian Mack—both leaders of the PEC—demanding such accounting and reporting. Lucas’s tone reflected his frustration. He demanded the full texts—not excerpts published in propaganda materials—of cablegrams sent from British officials in the region. In response, Jacob de Haas, secretary of the PEC (and editor of the *Boston Jewish Advocate*), agreed to send the copies of the full telegrams but noted that when it came to the most sensational telegram, supposedly sent by British Ambassador Cecil Spring-Rice but signed by members of the British Zionist organization, de Haas noted, “As to your argument about the Cecil Spring-Rice telegram, I really do not know what you are driving at, but will not bother you to explain.” The original manipulation of the telegram by de Haas only confirmed the suspicions of members of the JDC who already viewed the PEC’s public relations campaigns with skepticism.

While the JDC decided to send money to alleviate the real suffering caused by the expulsions, Lucas was displeased with the methods used to obtain these funds. Privately, in a letter to Schiff, Lucas articulated his accusation that Wise and the PEC misrepresented the facts to raise more money for Zionist, rather than relief, purposes. The sensational cable used to elicit funds, Lucas believed, was quite exaggerated. “The outrages are not nearly as serious, it is admitted, as they were alleged to have been, and again, may I say to you personally, I have very much mistrust in my mind over the transmission of our funds through this agency.” Yet, he concluded, the number of “nationalists” on the subcommittee who decided to send the funds meant the choice was all but inevitable.

In fact, the Zionists had already rescinded their sensational coverage of the Jaffa and Jerusalem expulsions, nearly as quickly as they had

52 Letter from Albert Lucas to Dr. Stephen S. Wise, 7 June 1917, Louis Marshall Papers, MS 359, box 49, folder 8, AJA.
53 Letter from Jacob de Haas to Albert Lucas, 12 June 1917, Jacob Schiff Papers, MS 456, box 453, folder 12, AJA.
54 Letter from Albert Lucas to Jacob Schiff, 7 June 1917, Jacob Schiff Papers, MS 456, box 453, folder 12, AJA.
issued the original story. In an article appearing in the Zionist press, dated 31 May 1917 (less than two weeks before the sharp exchange between Lucas and de Haas), the title “Again Quiet in Palestine” sought to reassure readers that “the former rumors regarding expulsion and outrages in Palestine presumed to have been committed, were largely exaggerated…. No more than 600 Jews left Jaffa.” In fact, the article continued, “The report [that all is well in Jaffa] animates from reliable sources, and states: that the previous stories relative to the treatment of Jews were fabricated.”

The updated status report, then, reflected the Zionists’ attempts to rescind their previous sensationalist reporting albeit without directly acknowledging fault. This perhaps avoided a direct confrontation between the non-Zionists in the JDC who objected to the “misrepresentation of the facts” to “elicit funds,” and the Zionist press.

Tension over Logistics and Distribution of Relief Aid in Palestine

In December 1914, at the urging of many, including Secretary of State Bryan, the JDC attempted to orchestrate the shipment of goods into Palestine, as well as navigate the complicated waters of depositing funds into the hands of agencies able to distribute them effectively to the needy Jews. Throughout the war, the JDC cooperated with the State Department; yet, logistics proved difficult and required walking into ideological minefields at times. Only a month into organizing such a shipment, the logistics, and the necessity of coordinating with the Zionists, led Felix Warburg to confess to Louis Marshall: “I wish you could find some way by which I could be freed from these complicated questions in Palestine.” Often, out of necessity rather than ideological conviction, the JDC used Zionist organizations and banks to distribute

55 “Again Quiet in Palestine,” Warheit Extra, 31 May 1917 (translation), Jacob Schiff Papers, MS 456, box 453, folder 12, AJA.
56 Telegram from William Jennings Bryan to Louis Marshall, 3 December 1914, Louis Marshall Papers, MS 359, box 40, folder 5, AJA.
58 Letter to Louis Marshall from Felix Warburg, 23 December 1914, Louis Marshall Papers, MS 359, box 40, folder 5, AJA.
funds. Since many of these had been operating in Palestine before the war, their infrastructure provided an existing conduit for relief aid.\textsuperscript{59} Eventually, the complications of the war necessitated that the JDC resolve officially in June 1916 to only use American organizations and individuals to donate funds and distribute aid. When the United States entered the war in April 1917, even that became deeply complicated, and it became necessary to ask neutral governments to intervene on behalf of American relief work.\textsuperscript{60}

In March 1915 the first major shipment of food and supplies was sent to Palestine under the auspices of the American Jewish Relief Committee. Planning for the ship preceded its launch by many months and included the creation of a subcommittee of the American Jewish Relief Committee: the Palestine Relief Ship subcommittee, chaired by Judah Magnes. Magnes intended for the ship to be sent by Jews for Jews. In a letter to Warburg, Magnes clearly noted, “I do not think that the non-Jewish funds should be used” to secure the ship.\textsuperscript{61} Jacob Schiff also emphasized that the ship was intended to carry relief to Palestinian Jews from their American co-religionists. Schiff had personally donated $25,000 toward the cost of the ship.

The USS \textit{Vulcan} set sail with Louis Levin aboard. Levin, of the American Jewish Relief Committee, was tasked with overseeing the ship’s contents and distributing the $1.5 million and nine hundred tons of food and medicine. In a letter to Levin, Schiff instructed that the supplies “are being sent by American Jewry for the relief of our co-religionists in the Holy Land” and that Levin “make every effort to make distribution in a just and equitable manner, so that the

\textsuperscript{59} In a memorandum dated 14 December 1914, Felix Warburg explained that in an effort to get money to Palestine, the representative of the JDC, E.W. Lewin-Epstein, would “cable via the American Express Co. the sum of $35,000 to the Carmel Wine Co.’s agent in London who will in turn cable it to Alexandria, where it will be paid in gold to Mr. Brill who undertakes its transmission.” Felix Warburg Papers, MS 457, box 165, folder 6, AJA.

\textsuperscript{60} Telegram from Jacob Schiff to Frederich Solomon Van Nierop, 11 May 1917, Louis Marshall Papers, MS 359, box 49, folder 8, AJA.

\textsuperscript{61} Letter from Judah Magnes to Felix Warburg, 26 February 1915, Felix Warburg Papers, MS 457, box 166, folder 27, AJA.
intention of the giver may in every way become fulfilled.” 62 Clearly, Schiff’s emphasis on the intention of the giver indicated that the aid was intended for Jews.

When the *Vulcan* arrived in Jaffa in April 1915, the distribution of goods did not go as smoothly as Schiff had hoped. Writing to Magnes, Levin reported on the events surrounding the *Vulcan* and asked that his letter be sent to all interested parties. Right away, Levin noted that the authorities in Jaffa were unprepared to handle the shipment of goods, and Morgenthau was asked to intervene on behalf of the relief workers aboard the *Vulcan*. After a series of delays involving disagreements about paying duties, Levin went to Jerusalem “and put the matter before Dejmal Pasha [the Ottoman military governor of Syria], who referred us to the civil governor of Jerusalem who in turn referred us to the Mayor, with whom we were finally able to come to a conclusion.” While debating the problem of paying a duty (which the committee believed they did not have to pay), Levin informed Magnes that “the question arose as to the division of the cargo between Jewish and non-Jewish population.” Despite Schiff’s concern that the goods be distributed to Jews, Levin noted that “the instructions from Washington to the American Consul [Glazebrook] were that the supplies be distributed to the whole population without regard to race or religion, and if this were done, and the whole population of the country taken into account, there would be very little for anyone, and practically none for the Jews.” The question of percentage of goods distributed to Jews—an early concern of the Zionists especially—appeared especially problematic in light of the contradiction of the *Vulcan*’s purpose and the American government’s directive. Eventually, after “considerable argument and study,” Levin agreed to distribute the goods to all of Palestine based on Jerusalem’s population ration (which contained more Jews than elsewhere in Palestine), thereby allotting more for the Jews than they would have received based on strict population percentages across Palestine. 63 While Glazebrook agreed, the Turkish authorities pointed out that the ship would be docked in

62 Letter to Louis Levin from Jacob Schiff, 8 March 1915, Jacob Schiff Papers, MS 456, box 459, folder 18, AJA.
63 According to Levin, Jerusalem’s population was 50,000 Jews and 30,000 non-Jews.
Jaffa—a majority Muslim population—and demanded that the distribution of goods be decided based on Jaffa and Jerusalem’s population distribution. This essentially, as Levin pointed out, left the Jews with less than half of the goods. After a committee, founded exclusively for the purpose of determining the distribution of goods, could not reach an agreement, Glazebrook intervened and set the distribution ratio at 55 percent for Jews, 26 percent for “Mohamedans,” and 19 percent for Christians.

The delays continued once the ship arrived in Jaffa, once again necessitating the intervention of Morgenthau from Constantinople, while the ship languished in the port. By 12 May the last of the goods left the Vulcan. Ultimately, Jaffa and Jerusalem received 69 percent of the goods, while the “Judean colonies” elsewhere, including Judea and Samaria, received 19 percent, and other places received the remaining percentage. Clearly frustrated, Levin concluded by reassuring Magnes, “For the present we are doing our best to make a just distribution of a very difficult method of relief.”

The controversy over the distribution of relief aid did not end when the Vulcan finally left, however. Divisions within the Jewish community of Palestine, between the Ashkenazi and Sephardic communities, complicated aid distribution. Glazebrook, acting under the instructions of Morgenthau, directed funds raised for relief to the Zionist programs operating in Palestine for further distribution. Once the money made its way to Jerusalem, the question of who received funds within the Jewish community continued during the next few years. In April 1916, the Orthodox Central Committee of New York had to intervene with David Yellin, the chair of the American Jewish Relief Committee in Jerusalem, to ensure that funds were fairly distributed. “We cannot

64 Letter from Louis H. Levin to Judah Magnes, 12 May 1915, Jacob Schiff Papers, MS 456, box 441, folder 9, AJA.
65 Ibid.
66 Letter from Otis Glazebrook to Mr. Appelroth, 4 December 1916, RG 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Jerusalem, Palestine, Volume 74, Part II, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
67 David Yellin (1864–1941): Author and educator born and raised in Jerusalem and for
too emphatically reiterate our desire that the distribution of relief as the result of contribution from American Jewry shall be made to Jews without reservation of any kind, by reason of a fact (true or alleged), that the applicant for relief comes from any particular country, is or is not an observant Jew, is or is not a follower of Zionism, or in fact, that the applicant for the portion of the assistance that can be given from the money provided by American Jewry is anything else than a needy Jew.”

These tensions reflect the differences that existed within the Jewish communities in Palestine. Jacobson has noted that the Sephardic community “was the dominant community among the old Yishuv in Palestine.” It consisted of members from various non-Western-European regions and was “perceived by the Ottoman authority as the sole representative of the Jewish community in Palestine,” as they held Ottoman citizenship (as opposed to Ashkenazi Jews, who retained their foreign citizenship). As mentioned above, scholarship by Michal Ben Ya’akov has highlighted the divisions within the Yishuv among Ashkenazi, Sephardi, and Mizrahi Jews; and when it came to the distribution of aid, often those most affected, particularly women, had little say over its distribution. In one example, a leader of the Sephardic Jewish community in Palestine sent an imploring letter to Glazebrook, asking for funds to help their community. Glazebrook had earlier requested that the community help a suffering single woman, and when the “Grand Rabbin” of the community approached the American Relief Fund for help, the Ashkenazi community—which apparently retained control of the relief fund—only offered “a quarter of a Turkish pound.” The Grand Rabbi wrote a letter to Glazebrook asking him to intervene. The state of the Sephardic community, in comparison to the Ashkenazi

many years served as a member of the municipal government of Jerusalem. He was exiled by Turkish authorities during WWI. Patai, ed., Encyclopedia of Zionism and Israel, 1243.

68 Letter to David Yellin from the Central Committee of New York, 21 April 1916, Felix Warburg Papers, MS 457, box 168, folder 20, AJA.


70 Ben Ya’akov, 223.
community, remained dire, he explained. “The cash of the community and the benevolent institutions are all in an incomparable penury. We cannot compare the state of the Sepharadite [sic] community to that of the Esehkenazium [sic] the only means to repair this inconvenience would be to repair with justice and impartiality the munificence of our generous coreligionists of Europe and America made in favor of the Jews of Palestine.” 71 He pointed out that relief organizations around the world had donated generously to the Ashkenazi community in Palestine, funding multiple charities and supporting their coreligionists, but except for the American donations, the Sephardic community remained unsupported. Those American donations, given through the JDC, were intended, he argued, to help all Jews, not just the Ashkenazi Jews. “The aid given to the poor Sepharadim [sic] by the American relief fund is very trifling in comparison to the number and their situation.” He argued that the Sephardic community had fewer representatives on the “executive committees” and that the Ashkenazis “preference to their coreligionists [fellow Ashkenazis]” without respecting the fact that the donors “wish all the Jews without designation of rite to be largely helped by their money.” For both groups to be helped, he proposed forming a committee that included more Sephardic leadership so that “good rules” would allow for a just distribution of funds. 72 When a distribution committee was established in 1914 in Jerusalem to disperse the aid collected by American Jews through the JDC to the Yishuv, members of the Jewish community in Jerusalem immediately protested the process by which relief aid could be obtained. In an article in the daily Hebrew language paper Hacheruth, the author claimed that the complicated process served no other purpose than “giving the ‘privileged ones’ the preference” and demanded an investigation into the committee’s actions. 73 The following month, perhaps in response to rising complaints, the

71 Letter from “Le Grand Rabbin” to Otis Glazebrook, 21 July 1916, RG 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Jerusalem, Palestine, Volume 74, Part II, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
72 Ibid.
73 Hacheruth #33, 10 November 1914, Louis Marshall Papers, MS 359, box 40, folder 5, AJA.
American Jewish Relief Committee sent a telegram to Morgenthau in Constantinople, with the instructions to add additional representation in the executive committee in charge of distributing funds in “the spirit … of giving fair representation to all elements.” Yet, two years later, it is clear that the perceived discrimination had continued. Whatever the intention of the American Jewish Relief Committee had been to create an equitable executive committee, in this case, then, the distribution of relief aid remained uneven and highlighted existing tensions within the Jewish communities of Jerusalem and exacerbated them further.

Conclusion
This more complicated exploration of relief aid in Palestine calls into question the idea of a foregone conclusion of the success of the Zionist vision for Palestine and highlights the aid debate in the context of the Zionist agenda preceding and during World War I. The questions of who got aid, what kind of aid, and how, shows us American Jewry’s far-from-unified response to the Zionist agenda as well as the tension within the Jewish community of Palestine. Figures who were either non-Zionists or anti-Zionists used existing Zionist infrastructure to support and care for the Jews of Palestine during World War I. But their intentions were strictly humanitarian and were not intended to strengthen Zionism.

Certainly American Zionists made significant claims to the stabilization of the colonies in Palestine. In an article titled “Another Armenia,” originally published on 30 March 1918 in the Sunday Magazine section of the *New York Herald* and reprinted as a publicity bulletin by the Zionist Organization of America, author and educator Jessie E. Sampter reviewed the enormous struggles undertaken by Zionists in Palestine to survive the war and dramatically described the “plan” by the Turkish government to mete out the same fate to the Jews of Palestine as that of the Armenians. Nonetheless, the Jews had survived, due in no small part to the United States. “There was one ever present helper since the first days of the war,” Sampter wrote. “America had stood like a guardian

74 Letter to Ambassador Morgenthau from the American Jewish Relief Committee, 22 December 1914, New York, Louis Marshall Papers, MS 359, Box 40, folder 4, AJA.
angel over Palestine. Not only had American Jews sent vast sums for relief to stave off famine and the American Zionists added loans to make possible continuous employment and cultivation, but the American government, not at war with Turkey, used its influence to protect Jewish interests.” Sampter heralded the British as “deliverers” who rescued the Jews of Palestine when they entered Jerusalem on 10 December 1917 and “took steps to redeem its pledge.” She concluded her article with an optimistic assessment of Palestine’s recovery under the efforts of the Zionists and British working together to rebuild the region. Sampter’s article highlights the attempt to strengthen Zionism among American Jews by remarking upon the dramatic and heroic efforts of American Jewish relief organizations to help the Jews of Palestine. Clearly, the JDC and Zionist organizations such as the PEC helped the Jews of Palestine, and that assistance strengthened the Jewish community at a crucial time. Yet, Sampter’s article closes the curtain across the tensions, distribution issues, and conflicting motivations behind that help and belies the complexity of the Zionist narrative in Palestine during World War I. Those who worried that aid to the Jews of Palestine, sometimes at the expense of non-Jews, would complicate an already-delicate ethno-religious environment would find similar arguments later echoed by those unsure of the benefits of Zionism to the indigenous population of Palestine. Like the arguments articulated by Samuel Pewsner during World War I, the arguments that improvements for the Jewish community would benefit nearby Palestinians would find a skeptical audience outside of Zionist circles. While fervently committed to aiding fellow Jews suffering from the effects of World War I in Palestine and elsewhere, non-Zionists working in relief aid worried that Zionist-only philanthropy could do great harm in its exclusionary agenda.

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Dr. Jacob V. Kahn, Camp Greenleaf, Georgia, 1918.
(Courtesy of Dorothy Kay Schwartz)
Linked by Letters: A Doctor with the American Expeditionary Forces and His Chicago Family, a Jewish World War I Story*

Ava F. Kahn

On the Fourth of July, 1957, a Chicago family on a road trip west picnicked on sandwiches, “watermelon (that was a must), strawberries and apple pie”1 in a Nebraska park and then settled in to watch fireworks from their blanket on the grass. The older man, who was taking his niece and her eighteen-year-old daughter on a trip across the country, was so

* This article is dedicated to Dorothy Kay Schwartz, Dr. Kahn’s grandniece. She advised me and shared with me photographs and letters addressed to her mother and grandmother. Dr. Kahn’s letters are quoted as written; they were not edited for spelling, grammar, or punctuation. The writing of this article was much improved by the assistance of several people and archives: Jonathan D. Sarna; Kevin Proffitt at The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives (hereafter AJA) and the Rabbi Joachim Prinz Memorial Fellowship; Paul W. Grasmehr, reference coordinator, Pritzker Military Museum & Library; Leonid Kondratiuk, director, Historical Services, Adjutant General’s Office, Massachusetts; Sanders Marble, Ph.D., senior historian, History Branch, Army Medical Department Center of History and Heritage, U.S. Army Medical Command; Eddy Oziol, historian, Academy of Clermont-Ferrand (France); Eric Panthou, librarian, Clermont Auvergne University (France); John F. Sweet, historian, University of Kansas; the staff at the American Jewish Historical Society (hereafter AJHS); Mitchell Richman; Ruth P. Haber, reader par excellence; and the insights of AJA’s anonymous readers.

1 Dr. Kahn’s grandniece remembers, “We then went to a small park— put a blanket down on the grass & had a wonderful picnic. After dark we watched fireworks. I will never forget that 4th. It had so much meaning for Uncle Jay. He loved his country— was so patriotic his entire Life…. Uncle Jay wanted to show me our beautiful Country which he loved so well. I shall NEVER forget what he did for me that summer. Nothing could have been better.” Email from Dorothy Kay Schwartz, 28 February 2018.
patriotic that he had to stop for the traditional picnic and fireworks, even in the middle of their travels. It would be unthinkable for him not to take every opportunity he could to express his patriotism.

The man’s name was Dr. Jacob V. Kahn, and the purpose of the road trip was to introduce his grandniece, Dorothy Kay Newberg, to the country he loved so much. “He talked of the love he had for the country,” and he wanted to share it all—from Rocky Mountain National Park, to Colorado Springs (to see the newly constructed Air Force Academy), to Denver, to the Great Salt Lake, and on to the Golden Gate. Although it had been almost forty years since he had served in World War I, some thought the “V” in his name stood for victory, so strong was his pride in the American victories and his love of country. Patriotism, medicine, and family formed the central pillars of his life.

Kahn had served the Chicago community and its Michael Reese and South Chicago hospitals for many years. He was what we would now call an old-fashioned doctor—making house calls with a black bag, delivering babies, and tending to patients of all ages. When he retired in the 1940s, he joined 168,000 Jews in making Los Angeles his new home.

To the outsider Kahn looked no different from other recent retirees who had settled in southern California. However, that is only part of his story and the story of many men of his generation. Kahn was a

2 Ibid.
3 Dorothy Kay Schwartz (née Newberg), in conversation with author.
4 This figure, an all-time high for the number of Jewish migrants in a year, would not be reached again. By 1950, these numbers produced a significant change in the percentage of Jews living in the city. At the beginning of the 1940s they numbered only 4 percent, but by the end of the decade the number reached to 7 percent. Indeed, the Jewish community grew faster than the general population that was also increasing by leaps and bounds. Bruce Phillips amplified the point: “At that time the majority (62 percent) of Jewish households reported being in the city five years or less; a mere 16 percent of Jewish households in Los Angeles in 1951 had lived in that city before World War II. In effect, a whole new community came into being in the space of a decade.” Bruce Phillips, “Los Angeles Jewry: A Demographic Portrait,” The American Jewish Year Book 86 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1986), 128, 141. By 1953, as many Jews lived in Los Angeles as lived in Kahn’s former home city of Chicago. Jacob Rader Marcus, To Count a People: American Jewish Population Data, 1585–1984 (New York: Lanham, 1990), 24, 57.
lieutenant with the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) in World War I. The role of native-born American Jewish soldiers in World War I has been largely overshadowed by American Jewish soldiers’ significant participation in World War II. And to the extent that the story of Jews in the AEF has gained attention, it is typically the story of heroism in battle and/or the challenges for new immigrants in military service. By contrast, Kahn was a U.S.-born medical professional, and his contributions make his story different and worthy of exploration.

The men who fought and survived World War I found that those years often shaped their world outlook, cemented their bond with home and country, and transformed their relationships with friends and family. For Kahn, these transformations became most evident in his intense patriotism, which he sought to pass down to future generations; and in his postwar curiosity to further explore the world. More subtle changes among these former soldiers are harder to define; however, they left clues in letters sent home. This article examines the letters Dr. Jacob Kahn sent to his family during his time in the AEF. His letters tell more about

7 The transformation of Jewish immigrants’ outlooks, loyalty, and confidence during the war years is documented in Sterba, *Good Americans*, especially the final chapters.
8 The collection consists of twenty-five handwritten letters and postcards received by Kahn’s sister, Ray Greenwald; sister-in-law Bessie Kahn; and niece Leah Greenwald from May 1918 to April 1919. The collection is held by family members. Plans are under way
his priorities and transformation than about the war itself. When read chronologically, they show progression from writing about the solely personal to also writing about relationships with the men with whom he served.

**The Distinctive Nature of War Letters**

In the days before instant communication by mobile phones and the Internet, letters from men in the training camps and on the battlefields provided the glue necessary to maintain family connections, transmit news of daily occurrences, and educate family members about life in the military. Beyond chronicling wartime experiences, the letters expressed concern for the welfare of family members, longing for home and Jewish holiday celebrations, and the new soldier’s increasing patriotism. By examining these letters and placing them in context, the twenty-first-century reader can reach a fuller understanding of the men, the events they experienced, and the dynamics of Jewish family life.

Most letters from soldiers contained a degree of truth. Due to military censorship, some locations and events could only be described at the war’s end. A soldier wrote from France, “I dare say that you or your mother have not received all of my mail. A great deal of it gets lost in the chief censor’s office.” Therefore, some men, at times unsuccessfully, employed subterfuge to bypass military censors. But the correspondence faced another censor as well; the men themselves shaped their narrative to fit their correspondents. Often, soldiers tried to protect and reassure their families of their safety. Letters reflected what the author wanted his audience to believe, not always the reality of the situation. A parent, sister, or friend may have wished to learn details about the soldiering life; however, the storyteller often fashioned the narrative to fit the intended reader’s knowledge, interest, and most importantly for some, perceived fears. Another factor to consider is gender. Men often wrote to women—their mothers, sisters, and children. Many letters became family and even public documents, shared by parents, siblings to make the collection available to researchers. Unless otherwise noted, the letters cited are in possession of the author.

9 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Leah Greenwald, 19 November 1918.
and newspapers alike. Did the soldiers write differently if the letters were intended for men only? This may be something for further study. Historians Deborah Dash Moore and Jessica Cooperman, both of whom have studied American war letters, agree that the letters are unreliable sources. 10

As a case study, however, letters can be illuminating. A century after they were written, these letters deserve to be studied and evaluated. World War I letters enlighten readers by chronicling individual experiences. At the same time, they push the reader to question what may be distorted or left unsaid. These distortions also give us insight and, together with confirmed descriptions, open another window into American Jewish family life in the early twentieth century. When the letters from the training camps and war zones began to arrive, how much did their recipients know about military life? What type of questions did they ask? In addition to big-city newspapers, some Jewish families learned about “their boys” in the columns of national Jewish newspapers. These articles often provided a context for letters received by family members. With a national circulation, the Cincinnati-based American Israelite served as a conduit between its readership and Jews in uniform, national organizations, and local war-related activities. Beyond its feature articles, the paper, like many newspapers of the day, corresponded with its readers throughout the United States and abroad. In a role similar to that of today’s social media, columns became an early-twentieth-century version of a curated Jewish Facebook.

With a correspondent system already in place, The American Israelite reported soldiers’ comings and goings as well as the wartime activities of Jewish communities large and small through its new column, “The War: Activities of Jewish Organizations, Societies, Congregations and Clubs Relating to the War.” It also printed calls for letters from its readers. For example, in November 1917, the paper asked for “news of our soldier boys, where they are stationed, their home town and family

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10 Email from Deborah Dash Moore to author, 3 October 2017. Jessica Cooperman, email to author, 4 October 2017. However, some historians successfully use soldiers’ letters to illustrate their arguments. For example, see Faulkner, Pershing’s Crusaders.
connections.”

Soldiers’ families and communities sent in personal correspondence they received from “the boys” that told stories of military life and shared private concerns. One serviceman, after describing a typical day of rising early for a day of physical training, which he stated he enjoyed, wrote, “Just as long as you and dad stay as well as I, we haven’t a thing to complain of.” This emphasizes a common theme in many war letters: a desire for confirmation of mutual well-being.

Local Jewish newspapers in major cities such as San Francisco and Chicago also published letters from the men in the military. Chicago’s Sentinel announced that it “welcomed pictures and items of the sons and daughters of its subscribers who are in government service. Be it good or bad news The Sentinel will lend whatever cheer it can.” In November 1917 the Sentinel ran the headline, “With the Jewish Boys at Rockford and Other Army Camps,” under which it published a letter from Sam Schwartz, who wrote, “I am now in France with the First American Expeditionary Force. As young as I am, I am going to do my bit for my country.” Schwartz reiterates another common theme: growing patriotism.

The thirst for letters to and from those in service was heightened during the war, but it followed a general emphasis on letter writing during that era. This was a generation of letter writers. In Chicago until 1950 residents received two mail deliveries a day. Before phone conversations replaced letters, people in different Chicago neighborhoods could expect answers to their morning letters by the afternoon mail. Daily letters were the email of the time. Family members at home shared letter-writing duties.

Throughout his time in the military, Kahn kept up a steady correspondence. Part of an extended family web, not all of his correspondents

11 The American Israelite (22 November 1917): 5.
12 Letter from Irwin E. Basler to his parents from Camp Sherman, 11 September 1917. Published as “Letter from a Young Soldier,” The American Israelite (20 September 1917): 8.
13 “With Our Boys Overseas and in the Camps,” The Sentinel (18 October 1918).
were directly related to each other or to the men overseas. But all who could be recruited wrote. Kahn’s extended family corresponded with as many as five soldiers during the war. His known correspondents included his parents (these letters are lost but are referred to in other letters); his sister, Ray; Ray’s teenage daughter, Leah; his sister-in-law, Bessie Kahn; and other extended family members (some also in the military).

Revealingly, Kahn wrote as many as three different versions of his experiences, often on the same day, tailored to his different correspondents. He wrote so many versions of the same events that, as he confessed to his sister-in-law, “I had one awful time trying to keep my stories straight at home, for I would forget the contents of one letter before I wrote another, and in but few of them did I tell the truth, and to tell the falsehoods I told and get away with it is remarkable.”

Why the different versions? In the letters sent to his parents, he remained perpetually well and never in harm’s way. He did not want them to worry. To his young niece, he wrote of the many interesting things he saw and always thanked her for her thoughtful gifts, especially gum. To his sister-in-law and sister, he wrote the closest to the truth, confiding in his sister-in-law at the end of the war that he was “surprised” his falsehoods had not been exposed.

Kahn’s family members also edited their letters to their loved ones in service. Relatives left out information to protect soldiers from bad news at home. Kahn worried that family members distorted details of his father’s health. As a doctor, he tried to take care of his family and patients at home emotionally and physically while he served thousands of miles away. In one letter he answered a question from his sister who had requested advice for her sister-in-law, whose baby was having trouble nursing. Now a military doctor, with mostly young men to treat, he wrote a detailed two-page description of how to supplement the baby’s breastfeeding. Even when far away, Kahn’s family and patients remained paramount.

15 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Bessie Kahn, 12 November 1918.
16 Ibid.
17 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, undated.
Jews: Native-born, German, and Russian

As the American military prepared for war, some labeled Jews as radicals and draft dodgers.\(^{18}\) In response, many Jewish leaders called for enthusiastic participation in the war effort; objectors obtained little reinforcement.\(^{19}\) “Help America to Victory! Help the Jewish People to Victory!” editorialized the *Sunday Jewish Courier* in Chicago.\(^{20}\) Rabbis and community leaders alike encouraged men to do their patriotic duty. Chicago’s *Sentinel* reprinted the appeal of the rabbinate of New York’s historic Shearith Israel, for “young men to give their services and their lives for the honor of their country.”\(^{21}\) Jews made up 4 to 5 percent of the forces, 200,000 to 250,000 men.\(^{22}\) Of those, thirty-five hundred died.\(^{23}\) The percentage of Jewish men who fought in World War I surpassed that of their numbers in the general population, where they comprised just 3.3 percent.\(^{24}\) About eleven thousand men

19 Ibid., 31, 59.
20 As quoted in Ford, *Americans All!*, 38. The article read in part, “The moment has also arrived for us Jews in America to prove that we love America, that we are thankful to America, and that we love our own people, and wish to make them free and happy.”
22 Julian Leavitt, “American Jews in the World War,” *The American Jewish Year Book* 21 (1919): 141–155. The exact number of Jews who served is difficult to verify. Not all Jews self-identified. In addition, the military did not always record religious preference. The Jewish Welfare Board sought to identify Jewish soldiers, but its records are incomplete. Ford, *Americans All!*, 37, puts the number at “over 250,000,” while Laskin writes that “Jews made up 5.73 percent of the Army,” a higher percentage than others have reported. Laskin, *Long Way Home*, 332. Christopher Capozzola argues that the exact percentage of Jews who served is not important because ethnic groups claimed overrepresentation in all aspects of war volunteerism; however, he believes the act of asserting overrepresentation suggests “the rhetorical power of voluntarism and the need,” in his words, to “go over the top.” Capozzola, *Uncle Sam*, 32.
24 Ibid.
from Kahn’s home city of Chicago served.  

25 For Jews, volunteering for the fight became a way to prove—and improve—their place in the American mosaic. “Ethnic communities saw Army service as a good way to Americanize and to raise their people’s status among ‘native’ Americans.”

26 Immigrants comprised 18 percent of the AEF; many more had immigrant parents.

However, the United States’ entry into the war provoked complicated and divergent feelings for some Jews. Many, having left Europe’s wars behind them, preached pacifism. California-born Rabbi Judah L. Magnes strongly supported this camp. Some saw the war as a vehicle for achieving rights for European Jews and establishing a national homeland in Palestine. Felix Frankfurter, an assistant to the secretary of war, believed with others that Zionism “is one of the issues of the war and one of the war’s necessary conclusions.”

The war also challenged the transnational identity of recent immigrants and their children. All could wholeheartedly support the Jewish relief efforts, but not all could agree on who the enemy was. Immigrants from Germany and their descendants faced personal conflicts. Many had strong cultural and intellectual ties with Germany, though not necessarily with the German government.

25 This number of men from Chicago varies considerably depending on the source. Cited is the figure reported by Maurice J. Nathanson, “Fighting Men,” The Sentinel: 100 Years of Chicago’s Jewish Life (August 1948), courtesy of Gail Goldberg, librarian, Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership. Twenty thousand is the figure cited by Hyman Louis Meites, History of the Jews of Chicago (Chicago: Chicago Jewish Historical Society, 1924), 258; and 5,967 by Leavitt, “American Jews,” 144.

26 Fax, Bare Hands, 43. Similar ideas are expressed by Faulkner, Pershing’s Crusaders, 238.

27 Sarna, American Judaism, 212.

28 Ibid., 64.

29 For more on Jews and the war effort see Ford, Americans All!, 37–42.

30 Fax, Bare Hands, 50.

31 Many Americans admired Germany’s cultural and educational emphasis. For a discussion of Jews, members of other ethnic groups, and support of World War I I see Fax, Bare Hands, 36, and Laskin, Long Way Home, 94. Laskin writes, “To Jews, Russia was the land of the pogrom; Germany, by comparison, seemed enlightened.” Also see Tobias Brinkmann, “‘German Jews?’ Reassessing the History of Nineteenth-Century
War, Jewish soldiers fought on both sides. JULIUS KAHN, the German-born Jewish congressman from San Francisco, removed the “German” from his German-American identity. The removal of the “hyphen” became a symbol of loyalty for ethnic groups, a way to demonstrate 100 percent Americanism and further their assimilation process. In an interview with The American Israelite, Congressman Kahn stated that he was an “Out-and-Out American, With No Hyphen.” Explaining that “America is the same to all of us, Jew or Gentile, native or foreign born. It means the right to live as free men,” he concluded that it was important for Jews to be patriotic and join the fight.

Russian Jews and their descendants faced other complications. Many Jewish families who had escaped persecution in Russia supported Germany’s offensive against the army of the czar. Jewish parents could not fathom sending their children to fight alongside the tyrant’s army. However, these fears would be reevaluated in 1917 with the onset of the Russian Revolution. Now, with the passage of the Balfour Declaration supporting a Jewish homeland and the czar overthrown, most Jews firmly supported the war effort.


32 Laskin, Long Way Home, 92.
33 Julius Kahn is not related to Jacob Kahn or the author of this article.
34 Alien sedition fears produced a call for “100% Americanism,” and sought conformity with “dominant Anglo-Saxon culture.” Faulkner, Pershing’s Crusaders, 234.
35 “Congressman Julius Kahn,” The American Israelite (23 August 1917). On 4 April 1917 the United States entered the war; just a week later, The American Israelite in Cincinnati published an article by Hungarian-born Rabbi David Lefkowitz, who had been ordained by Hebrew Union College in 1900 and served a congregation in Dayton, Ohio. His article stressed that “Every American,… even every German-American, must stand shoulder to shoulder guarding the flag of our beloved country.” David Lefkowitz, “The Duty of the Home,” The American Israelite (12 April 1917): 7. These pronouncements countered the argument that German Jews, especially bankers, were part of German conspiracy movements. Capozzola, Uncle Sam Wants You, 181.
36 The Forverts reported, “As if by magic, the debates and discussions on the Jewish streets have disappeared.” As quoted in Laskin, Long Way Home, 119. Also see Slotkin, Lost Battalions, 88.
Family History

Fleeing czarist Russia, Jacob Kahn’s father, Moses Aaron Kahn, reached Cincinnati in 1881. According to family history, he left behind his pregnant wife, Libbie, and a young son. Libbie died in childbirth, and her sister, Anna Wolf, brought the two children to Cincinnati in 1886 where she married Moses Kahn, her sister’s widower. Five years later, the family resettled in South Chicago; Kahn opened a business in that largely immigrant and first-generation neighborhood. There, the Kahns lived for decades in a tight family circle surrounded by extended family, cousins, and in-laws. In 1898, Moses Kahn helped establish the Congregation Bikur Cholim, serving for many years as its president.

In the congregation and at home, Moses Kahn modeled for his children traditional Jewish life. Like most American Jewish immigrants, the family strongly believed that the United States would become their generational home. In addition to the two children brought from Europe, Anna and Moses together added five children to the family. Of Moses’s daughters, Ray married; Dorothy died at age twenty-six. Of the five sons, three became lawyers, one a salesman, and the youngest, Jacob, a doctor.

Even when Jacob Kahn attended Northwestern Medical School, an hour’s ride from home, he continued to live in his parent’s home in Chicago’s 8th Ward. In fact, it is likely that he had never been away from his parents before military service. At Northwestern, the soon-to-be

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37 Moses Kahn joined the approximately 2 million Jews who fled Russia’s Pale of Settlement between 1881 and 1914 after a wave of pogroms. Kahn, like other men, left his family in Russia and sent for them when he could afford to do so. This chain migration is described by Laskin in Long Way Home, 2.
38 The author wishes to thank Dorothy Schwartz for this information.
40 Referred to in letters later quoted and emails to the author from family members.
41 Evidenced by the establishment of roots in the community and founding of permanent institutions; also note: “Immigrant parents hoped their children would succeed as Americans, and at the same time feared the consequences.” Slotkin, Lost Battalions, 86.
42 Jacob was born 6 June 1890.
doctor became sergeant-at-arms of his 1913 medical school class. The class, with men from all ethnicities, selected Kahn because of “his great physical strength combined with courage.” As a Jew, this distinction provided proof of inclusion in American society, something Kahn would take for granted his entire life. The regimentation of medical school helped him value military training. In the service he found commonalities not only with doctors of varied ethnic groups, but also with other officers in his AEF unit. His abilities, along with progressive scientific methods and efficacies learned in medical school, propelled Kahn beyond his immigrant home. From this point on, Kahn’s identity did not hinge only on his ethnic background or his immigrant family, but also on his being a member of the American professional class.

After graduation from Northwestern Medical School in 1913, Kahn accepted an internship at Chicago’s Michael Reese Hospital and soon afterward became affiliated with the South Chicago Community Hospital. When the United States entered the war, Jacob Frank, a surgeon at Michael Reese who had served as a lieutenant colonel in the army, encouraged young doctors to enlist. Soon Kahn, 27, joined the over forty thousand other American Jews who enlisted, becoming a lieutenant in the AEF. Indeed, he so wanted to serve that he volunteered in Boston, as the Chicago contingent had filled its medical quota (almost eight thousand Jews joined the medical corps). Kahn served with men from the Northeast in the 303rd Field Artillery Regiment. This regiment became part of the 76th Division, a U.S. Army division formed in April of 1917 after the United States declared war on Germany. Populated

44 For scientific-management training in the Progressive Era see Ford, Americans All! especially the introduction.
45 Medical school classes focused on classroom lectures, laboratory work, and abundant time in hospital clinics for observation and supervised training with patients. Northwestern University Bulletin, “The Medical School: Annual Catalogue 1910–11” (Evanston, 1910).
46 Meites, Jews of Chicago, 262.
47 Leavitt, “American Jews,” 146. Leavitt believes “that there were from 40,000 to 50,000 Jewish volunteers in the service.”
48 Ibid., 143.
by volunteers and draftees, it joined Regular Army Divisions and the newly federalized National Guard Divisions.\textsuperscript{49}

Kahn’s first military experience came in May of 1918 when, before heading overseas, he was sent to Fort Oglethorpe in Georgia, the army’s training camp for medical officers. Former civilians, now newly minted soldiers, sent letters home describing their new lifestyle.\textsuperscript{50} Kahn depicted camp life for his family, sending his first letters home soon after he reported to Fort Oglethorpe’s Camp Greenleaf. Kahn’s letters from Georgia give the reader a clue to his concerns. He focused on four main themes: assertions of well-being to reassure family members, descriptions of his activities, concern for the health of those at home, and yearning for letters from home. His letters were rarely negative; usually they sought to give his family an upbeat picture of his new military lifestyle. It is hard to discern whether he portrayed events as he saw them or made his experience sound pleasant for his family. Even when he complained about the heat and the long, strenuous days of working outside, he emphasized the value of these experiences.

\textbf{Training Begins}

The Georgia camp, established in the Chickamauga National Battlefield Park in May of 1917, only operated for eighteen months.\textsuperscript{51} It trained 6,640 officers and 31,138 enlisted men; on average, 2,619 officers

\textsuperscript{49} The division (minus its Medical Corps that trained in Georgia) formed and trained in Massachusetts at Camp Devens, a recently created post that first opened its doors in September 1917, after the United States entered the war.

\textsuperscript{50} There were training camps in all corners of the country with military names including: Devens (Massachusetts), Funston (Kansas), Grant (Illinois), Upton (New York), Fremont (California), Logan (Texas), and Wheeler (Georgia). For additional letters from Jewish soldiers, see special war columns in the Jewish press including Chicago’s \textit{Sentinel} and Cincinnati’s \textit{American Israelite}. Collections containing letters are archived at the AJA and the AJHS.

\textsuperscript{51} It was established under a 1917 plan that placed military training facilities on battlefields and national park lands. These lands were managed by the War Department. See https://www.nps.gov/articles/chickamaugawwi.htm (accessed 7 February 2018); https://gettyburgcompiler.org/2015/03/02/a-useable-past-first-world-war-training-camps-on-civil-war-battlefields/ (accessed 7 February 2018).
trained at one time. These new medical officers would serve in motor field units, mule-drawn units, and hospitals. Built on swampland, the camp required a drainage ditch before the army could construct barracks, a mess hall, lavatories, an auditorium, a hostess house (visitor facilities for relatives of soldiers who wanted to spend time with their sons before they departed overseas), and a library adjacent to the parade ground. Although the land became dry, the weather was still uncomfortably hot and humid. Formal training commenced in June of 1917. However, demonstrating the military’s lack of preparedness for the war, the camp did not reach its “potentiality for efficient work” until September of 1918, two months before the war’s end. Inexperienced commanders failed to order supplies and equipment, causing delays in processing officers through the camp.

When Kahn arrived at Camp Greenleaf, the camp was receiving 585 medical officers per month, while in the same period, 513 men finished their training and rejoined their units. These men, all medical school graduates, had spent years of their lives studying to be professionals, not soldiers. This had to change when they entered military service and were instructed: “You are now a Soldier of the United States; a Soldier Selected by your Country to fight for the Freedom of the World. . . . WALK like a soldier, THINK like a soldier, ACT like a soldier, BE A SOLDIER.”

The battalion’s training regimen became a common subject of letters. The program required monthly three-day practice marches of six to seven miles a day, where the men carried their own supplies and camped in the field. Campfire conferences in the evening educated men

53 Ibid., 17.
54 Ibid., 19. When Kahn left Camp Greenleaf in mid-June of 1918 program upgrades had started. On 6 June a morale officer was assigned. Ibid., 61.
55 Ibid., 22.
56 Ibid., 25.
57 Ibid., 63.
on topics such as foot care and camp cookery.\textsuperscript{58} On a steamy Georgia June day, Kahn wrote of his march:

\begin{quote}
I have been away from here since Thursday a.m. on a hike. It was long, tedious, and very difficult. The weather was extremely unfavorable and the first rain storm we had since I’ve been here was the first night of our camp. During this storm we were flooded away got good & wet, remained awake all night and traveled again the next day. The walk was long and tiring, but the experience was wonderful.\textsuperscript{59}
\end{quote}

This is just one example of a letter that leads the reader to expect a negative conclusion, but after a variety of complaints reaches a positive resolution. He went on to comment that these hikes and other strenuous physical work prepared them for campaign marches and that he was grateful that he was getting stronger. Growing up in an urban center, it is likely that Kahn had not experienced a great deal of outdoor exercise.

Not all of their training involved preparing for battle. When they arrived at camp, officers took an oral exam in general medicine and surgery, as well as in their specialties.\textsuperscript{60} Taught “university style,” the medical officers’ program was conceived as a three-month course.\textsuperscript{61} Lecture topics varied from using military supplies in the field to regulations and proper use of a soldier’s equipment.\textsuperscript{62} In the second week of instruction, French language study became a part of their coursework. Classes were separated by regiment. This led to flexibility; as the situation changed and/or men required specialized training, new groups could be assembled and older groups dismantled. To boost morale, the camp presented soldiers with periodic lectures with titles such as: “Why we are at War,” “Why we are sure to Win the War,” “Traditions in the American Army,” and “Opportunities of Self-Improvement in the Army.”\textsuperscript{63} When not in class

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 75–77. \\
\textsuperscript{59} Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 9 June 1918. \\
\textsuperscript{60} Bispham, Medical Department, 72. \\
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 18, 71. \\
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 73–75. \\
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 69. Also see Ford, Americans All!, especially 3–15.
or at lectures, the men could take part in a few entertainment programs and recreational activities.  

Some of the details in Kahn’s letters, including time allotted for meals and training, cannot be reconciled with official camp schedules. This could be because many programs were in flux until a few weeks before Kahn left for overseas. It would seem strange that he would alter reports of his schedule for family members. In one of his first letters home, Kahn wrote to his sister, Ray Greenwald:

Dear Sister:
Excuse me for not writing sooner but I was terribly busy. I wish to thank you a million times for the elegant party you gave for me before I left. That week was the reverse to this last one. This one was hard work from 5:45 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. without a minute rest and only 15 minutes allowed for each meal.  

According to the official histories, however, the doctors rose at 6:00 AM, exercised, ate breakfast, cleaned their quarters, then drilled and attended lectures until a noontime dinner; afterward they returned to the morning schedule of drilling and lectures until a 6:00 PM supper. This official schedule allows more free time than Kahn’s correspondence portrayed.

From the letters the reader is able to puzzle out the questions asked by relatives at home. Before movies and television’s “M*A*S*H” brought military doctors into our homes, Kahn sought to describe his living conditions to his family. To his sister, Kahn explained what it was to “live out of a trunk.”

Each man in the barracks,… is permitted to have a small space to contain 1 cot—with blankets—and pillow—1 trunk and 1 traveling bag. 1 hook on the wall, which must contain only 1 overcoat or raincoat & 1

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64 However, these activities were not open to African Americans. They served in segregated units which were not permitted to attend group programs and entertainments. A tent, provided by the YMCA, staged separate programing for them. Bispham, *Medical Department*, 69. Kahn never mentioned the ethnicity, race, or religion of his fellow soldiers.

65 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 12 May 1918.
suit. Other than the clothes on this hook, nothing—absolutely nothing dare be left outside a fellow’s trunk a minute…. You can imagine the predicament. But, we get used to it soon. Once or twice daily an Inspector comes around at an unknown time & examines everything. If a button or a coat or breeches on the wall is unbuttoned or a blanket not folded absolutely in regulation style you have something severe to account for. 66

Comparing what he wrote with camp histories shows that Kahn provided his family with an accurate account of this aspect of barrack life. The regulations specified everything he described, including that clothing had “reasonable attitude toward fit.” 67

In another letter, Kahn extolled the benefits of his new lifestyle and at the same time demonstrated his allegiance to his country, writing: “I am feeling very well, in fact better than I ever have before. I have been here almost a month, and thank God have not felt a sign of a headache. That’s a great deal for me.” 68 He went on, expressing gratitude to the country his parents immigrated to: “If this life does nothing more for me than to cure my headaches I have the United States to bless for ever & ever. And in my firm belief from the strength I have gained in the short time here. I owe my Country a great deal for all it’s done for me.” 69

On the day following Kahn’s letter about his newfound health, concerns at home about the war effort grew. Headlines in The Chicago Daily Tribune read, “FOE 55 MILES FROM PARIS.” 70 Family at home worried not only about the war, but also about the welfare of their soldiers, including their diet. They often sent cakes and other favorites. After

66 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 30 May 1918.
67 Bispham, Medical Department, 64. The military adopted scientific time-management ideas as used in early twentieth-century manufacturing. For example, see the 1916 Manual of Intensive Training, which stressed efficiency and sought to put an end to the “duplication of efforts, misdirection of energy, waste of time … and mismanagement of individual tasks.” As quoted in Ford, Americans All!
68 A similar thought was expressed by a Jewish soldier from Massachusetts, who wrote home, “I feel great. The best that I have felt in a long time.” Faulkner, Pershing’s Crusaders, 71.
69 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 30 May 1918.
describing a typical day of rising early for physical training, which he stated he enjoyed, one serviceman asked his parents to send him tobacco, cake, and chocolate. The camp regulations stated that meals should be “wholesome, not dainty.”

Kahn wrote of the camp’s offerings: “We are getting wonderful meal[s] with plenty home grown fresh vegetables and berries.” He told his sister not to send food, because he had all he needed. Kahn emphasized the high quality of food throughout his correspondence—although if the camp had served poor-quality food, it is likely that Kahn would not have mentioned it, as this would worry his family. While he was raised in an Orthodox home, Kahn did not seem troubled by the lack of kosher food; however, none of his letters from training camp mention eating meat. Probably the medical officers’ meals resembled those served to other soldiers at Camp Oglethorpe—which included for Passover “roasted pork and matzoth.” Whether this was someone’s idea of a celebratory meal or an antisemitic statement is unclear.

Kahn wrote some of his letters in pencil from his quarters; if he wanted to write in pen, he was required to go to the camp’s YMCA, which also provided the men with stationery. Under the auspices of the Commission on Training Camp Activities, the YMCA at the training camps and in Europe provided a place where men could spend their limited free time in what the military called a “‘clean and wholesome’ environment.” Led by Progressive reformers, the aim of the YMCA

71 Letter from Irwin E. Basler from Camp Sheridan to his parents, 11 September 1917. Published as “Letter from a Young Soldier,” The American Israelite (20 September 1917): 8.
72 Bispham, Medical Department, 64.
73 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 12 May 1918.
74 Fax, Bare Hands, 65.
75 Secretary of War Newton D. Baker appointed Raymond B. Fosdick in 1917 to head the Commission on Training Camp Activities. The CTCA was charged with providing activities for soldiers that would help them avoid boredom (a problem in earlier wars) and lead them away from immoral activities. These services were to be open to all men regardless of religious affiliation. The YMCA became a civilian partner with the government to administer these programs. See Ford, Americans All!, 88–111, quote on 89. However, both Catholic and Jewish leaders questioned the YMCA’s ability to be nonsectarian. The Knights of Columbus and the Jewish Welfare Board were eventually
in the military was to keep men “away from negative influences such as prostitution, alcohol, and gambling and direct them to positive alternatives like sports, music, and reading.”76 By June 1918 representatives of the Knights of Columbus and the Jewish Welfare Board joined the YMCA with “huts” in the camp, but the extent of their activities is unclear during the dates of Kahn’s training.77

Most of Kahn’s letters demonstrate his strong bond with family; this theme would remain foremost throughout his military service. In early May of 1918 he wrote to his sister Ray, “I miss the folks more than ever. I don’t know if I will be able to hold out away from them.”78 To combat his loneliness and assist his father, Kahn requested that his sister send their father to visit him. He believed that the warm spring in the South would improve the health of his father, who was often ill. He even offered to pay for the trip and provide for his parents if his father would take a break from his long workdays at his Chicago store. However, these plans never came to fruition.

**Deployment**

In mid-June, just six weeks into the specialized three-month program for medical officers, Kahn’s unit ordered him to report to Camp Devens in Massachusetts. According to camp historians, “due to urgent military necessity, many officers had to be detailed away from camp before the course was completed and therefore these men were only partially trained.”79

At Camp Devens, Kahn rejoined the 76th Division as part of the 151st Artillery Brigade serving with the 303rd Field Artillery Regiment. He wrote to his sister, “I understand I have a wonderful appointment.”80

designated to provide additional services. For a full discussion of the JWB’s creation and lasting effects see Jessica Cooperman, “The Jewish Welfare Board and Religious Pluralism in the American Military of World War I,” *American Jewish History*, 98, no. 4 (October, 2014): 239; first annual report of the JWB, New York, 1919, AJHS, New York.

77 Bispham, *Medical Department*, 61.
78 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 12 May 1918.
79 Bispham, *Medical Department*, 71.
80 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 18 June 1918.
The population of Camp Devens demonstrated the vast diversity of the AEF. Just a month after Kahn left Camp Devens for Europe, the army completed a survey of the religious affiliations of the camp’s soldiers. A high percentage of the 25,607 soldiers—mostly from the Northeast—were immigrants, reflecting the population of the area’s ethnic centers. The survey found 11,731 Catholics and 931 Jews, with most of the rest belonging to different denominations of Christianity, from Greek Orthodox to Quaker. The balance included thirty Muslims and sixty Mormons, along with a small number of Dursi, spiritualists, agnostics, and others.\(^{81}\)

Kahn’s multi-ethnic unit left Camp Devens via the East Boston harbor on 16 July 1918.\(^{82}\) The United States did not have sufficient troop transport ships, so they boarded the Australian HMT \textit{Miltiades}, an eight-thousand-ton Aberdeen line ship. The ship came pre-equipped with foods to the liking of Australians and foreign to most young Americans. This became, for many, their first experience of life beyond U.S. borders. The ship traveled to Halifax, Canada, with two additional transports, a destroyer, and two chasers.\(^{83}\) At Halifax, the \textit{Miltiades} joined a large convoy of twenty-two ships guarded by the HMS \textit{Berwick}, a British armed cruiser built in 1903, already past its prime.\(^{84}\)

On the trip across the Atlantic, Kahn encountered danger for the first time: On 29 July, the convoy faced “violent” German submarine attacks, and American and British destroyers dropped depth bombs.\(^{85}\) The same

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81 For the complete study see Faulkner, \textit{Pershing’s Crusaders}, 408.
82 An examination of the names of the men in Kahn’s medical unit reveals a multiplicity of ethnic backgrounds. For example: Alphonse Quirron, Henry C. Severance, John W. Wotawa, Harry A. Clark, and of course, Kahn. 303rd Medical Detachment, \textit{The G.P.F. Book: Regimental History of the Three Hundred and Third Field Artillery} (unknown publisher and date, circa 1921), 363–364.
83 Ibid., 24.
84 For more about the HMS \textit{Berwick} see http://www.berwick-cittaslow.org.uk/hmsberwick.html (accessed 24 July 2017).
85 \textit{G.P.F. Book}, 24. In 1917 Germany commenced “unlimited submarine warfare.” Their aim was to cut off supplies to England and France by closing the Atlantic corridor. This would, in their evaluation, also stop the possibility of American troops’ reaching the war zone. The Allies did not have the technology to locate submarines in sufficient numbers.
day, the Chicago Tribune reported a U-boat attack during a transatlantic crossing. 86 Describing the crossing to his sister as “uneventful,” 87 Kahn used this letter, like others that followed, to reassure his family that his experiences sharply differed from what they read in the local press.

By 31 July the convoy safely reached Newport, England. There the regiment marched through town, where the mayor greeted them before they boarded a train for the Winnal Down Rest Camp in Winchester; they remained there for two days’ rest. 88 For Kahn, the stay in England provided the hope of connecting with family. Although born in Cincinnati, Kahn, like many children of immigrants, had family outside of the United States. In addition to family in Russia and Sweden, he had relatives not far from where his regiment camped. He wrote to his sister that his regiment was “located about 15–18 miles from Dad’s people, but the Commanding officer refused to allow any of the men to leave Camp. So, I was unable to visit them. I heard from uncle and told him I was certainly going to visit them on my first ‘leave of absence.’” 89 Unfortunately, due to the lack of transportation during wartime, his visit was postponed indefinitely.

This was Kahn’s first taste of foreign travel, something that would become a habit for him later in life. On 4 August the regiment boarded the USS Yale for Le Havre, France; there the deputy mayor welcomed them with flowers. 90 From the port the 303rd Regiment traveled by train about 349 kilometers south of Paris to its new training area not far from the city of Clermont-Ferrand, where they arrived on 7 August to

87 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 29 July 1918.
continue their abbreviated training and wait for French armaments.91 The 3rd Battalion billeted near the town of Beaumont.92 Having “passed through Paris and many other beautiful cities,” Kahn, who thoroughly enjoyed the trip,93 shared the news of the regiment’s status with his family at home: “Apparently we are going to get from three to four months service with the unit while they are getting their advance training before we get any real active service at the front. No doubt that it will be every bit of three months. As the men in the [artillery] regiment need more training as many of them are only in the service a short time.”94

The 303rd, in fact, did remain in Beaumont for three months, where they prepared for the front. Contemplating his unit’s entry into actual warfare, Kahn lamented, “I wish it were sooner, as I am terribly anxious to see some of the real thing. As long as I am giving my services I would feel better if they could be used to better advantage with the boys.”95 As a new National Army Division, the 76th was last in line behind the regular divisions and the federalized National Guard to be issued the equipment needed for battle and therefore saw only a relatively short time in combat.

Once his regiment was headquartered near Clermont-Ferrand, Kahn used a historical reference to let his family know of his location. In a

91 According to Paul W. Grasmehr, reference coordinator, Pritzker Military Museum & Library, “The 151st Field Artillery Brigade consisted of a field artillery regiment equipped with 75mm (3-inch) guns, a field artillery regiment equipped with 4.7-inch guns, the 303rd Field Artillery Regiment, armed with the French G.P.F., a 6-inch (155mm) rifles and a Trench Mortar Battery. The artillery pieces assigned to the 303rd Field Artillery Regiment, twenty-four assigned to the regiment in three eight-gun battalions, could hit targets 10.4 miles in the enemy rear areas. These targets were located by U.S. or Allied observation aircraft or balloons. The targets engaged were typically enemy supply depots, rail heads used for moving men and materials or troop concentrations moving from one sector of the front to another.” Email to author, 16 June 2017.

92 According to Eddy Oziol, historian, Academy of Clermont-Ferrand, who has been documenting the AEF in Puy de Dôme, where Kahn was stationed, more than thirty thousand U.S. soldiers were billeted in the area between 1917 and 1919. Email to author, 5 January 2018. For more about the region and Americans during WWI see Oziol’s Facebook group: 1917–1919. Les Américains dans le Puy de Dôme. Une histoire retrouvée.

93 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 11 August 1918.

94 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 29 July 1918.

95 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 11 August 1918.
letter to his sister-in-law he described the region’s geography and historic importance:

Dear Bess,

At last I am permanently settled in the Southern part of France, where the flowers and breezes refresh the air, and the sun keeps us warm.

I am located in a beautiful part of the country only a short distance from Spain. The weather is beautiful, and the surroundings great. We are surrounded by beautiful mountains, also historically famous ones. The Battle between Caesar and the Gauls was fought here, and as an everlasting memorial they have erected a beautiful castle [Montrognon] on the summit of the highest mountain here.96

While seemingly quite descriptive, this passage causes the reader several quandaries. Clermont-Ferrand is located in central, not southern, France, and it is more than three hundred miles from the Spanish border. There are several possible explanations for this misinformation. First, perhaps Kahn was unfamiliar with French geography; he might have considered Clermont-Ferrand “southern” France because it is south of Paris and certainly not in the northern or western parts of the country, where the war raged. Also, he may have considered the three-hundred-mile trip to Spain relatively short because he was accustomed to U.S. geography, where distances are greater—for example, the distance between his home in Chicago and Los Angeles, where he had family, is about two thousand miles. Or it could be further subterfuge to confuse the censor. All is speculation.

The second part of the paragraph describes the location of a specific battle. In 52 BCE Vercingetorix, the leader of Gallic forces, defeated Julius Caesar’s Roman Republic Army near Clermont-Ferrand at the Battle of Gergovia. A monument built by Napoleon III to honor Vercingetorix’s victory still stands on the Gergovie plateau, which

96 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Bessie Kahn, 18 August 1918. The day before, Kahn wrote a similar letter to his sister: “Am settled now, in southern Sunny France, where the weather is more beautiful…. We are situated between the mountains and the scenery all around us is most beautiful.” Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 17 August 1918.
overlooks Clermont-Ferrand. 97 The historical reference in the letter assumed that the reader had an understanding of history and the availability of reference books.98 Therefore, with a little research, the family in Chicago knew exactly where Kahn resided.

In this beautiful region, far from the front, it was Kahn's responsibility to teach and supervise the detachment, making sure that they had knowledge of proper first-aid techniques. As the battalion surgeon, he advised “the unit commander on health and sanitation and preventative medicine.”99 Sometimes he had to fill the demanding role as the military representative of humanitarian principles: to “preserve life and restore … the health of the sick and wounded” and to keep morale high, letting the men know that every effort would be made to make them well and whole.100 The only physician on duty, he directed a medical detachment of 12 men responsible for the health of 450 men. In his infirmary he treated the ill and wounded. The doctors and their patients benefited from recent medical advances, including anesthesia, antisepsis, and triage and blood transfusion procedures.101 Outside of injuries, men most likely sought medical attention for one of five conditions: influenza, venereal disease, mumps, measles, or tuberculosis.102 It was here that Kahn’s Northwestern and hospital training in modern medical techniques became paramount.

Kahn wrote: “We are so far from the battle fields that we don't even know that there is such a thing as War going on.”103 He told his family: “When I was in the States I occasionally heard some war news, but here

98 It is interesting to note that this reference was only given in the letter to his sister-in-law, not repeated in a similar letter to his sister.
99 Email from Sanders Marble, senior historian, History Branch, Army Medical Department Center of History and Heritage, U.S. Army Medical Command, 26 June 2017.
100 Faulkner, Pershing’s Crusaders, 570.
101 Ibid., 566.
102 Ibid., 569.
103 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 17 August 1918.
I’m so isolated, never see a newspaper.”104 Removed from the war effort, the battalion fought local fires when needed.105 The artillery regiment did not receive its first big guns for training until 25 August, three weeks after they arrived in France.106 At the time of the American entrance in the war, few training manuals in English for artillery armaments even existed.107

When the regiment was healthy, Kahn did not have much to do. He told his sister-in-law, “I am having a good time here, and living the life of ease…. I enjoy the work most immensely.”108 He reported to his sister: “Food is plentiful and we get anything we want.”109 As the artillery still

104 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Bessie Kahn, 18 August 1918.
105 It is likely that some of the fires were caused by the Americans themselves, as lighting matches outside of restricted areas was a problem. Faulkner, Pershing’s Crusaders, 152.
107 See “Training—The Army at War With Itself,” Fax, Bare Hands, especially 100–101.
108 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Bessie Kahn, 18 August 1918.
109 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 17 August 1918. According to Eddy Oziol, historian, Academy of Clermont-Ferrand, “Life is beautiful for an American
needed training and they were far from danger, there is no reason to believe that Kahn’s account is too far off the mark.

In the early fall of 1918, beyond good food and beautiful scenery, Kahn wanted to celebrate the High Holidays. The military ordered furloughs for Jewish soldiers not engaged in military operations, and the Jewish Welfare Board provided services for many Jewish soldiers; however, Kahn does not mention any Jewish organization or contact with other Jewish servicemen.\(^{110}\) Instead, he wrote, “I have made arrangements to spend the Holidays with some very wealthy people here. This city [Clermont-Ferrand] (about 2 miles from where I’m located) is one of the largest in France.”\(^{111}\) By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some Eastern European Jews had migrated to France, most settling in Paris.\(^{112}\) The Jewish community of Clermont-Ferrand

officer. They are very far from the ravages and destruction of war, and even if Kahn recognized that there are no men in the villages. Food is abundant for American soldiers, as they are supplied by the American Army. The Americans could buy alcohol, wine and fruit, whatever they wanted; they could afford to pay more than local villagers.” Email to author, 5 January 2018. Because of this disparity of wealth, the American presence was a mixed blessing for locals. They contributed funds to the local economy, but at the same time, they priced locals out of the market.

\(^{110}\) The military made the furloughs possible by ordering that “‘soldiers of the Jewish faith serving in the American Expeditionary Forces will be excused from all duty, and where deemed practicable, granted passes, to enable them to observe in their customary manner the Jewish religious holidays.’” As quoted in Ford, Americans All! 122. For a contemporary account see: Rabbi Lee J. Levinger, A Jewish Chaplain in France (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), 10–26. In October of 1918, of the 789 chaplains stationed in France, only 5 were Jewish. Most chaplains were stationed with combat units. All chaplains were trained to minister to men of different religious affiliations. Therefore, a Jewish chaplain could administer Catholic last rites and a Catholic chaplain could lead a Jewish service. Faulkner, Pershing’s Crusaders, 420–425. During World War I the military commissioned twenty-five rabbis, twelve of whom served the AEF in Europe. See Cooperman, “Jewish Welfare Board,” especially 254n43, 252–255.

\(^{111}\) Letter from Jacob Kahn to Bessie Kahn, 18 August 1918. For more about how Jewish soldiers celebrated see Laskin, Long Way Home, 233–234.

Letter from Jacob Kahn to Bessie Kahn, 18 August 1918.
(Courtesy of the author)
was relatively small in 1918, consisting of maybe thirty families, most of whom probably ran merchant businesses such as clothing stores. Some had lived in the region for twenty-five years or more and were well ensconced in the community. 113

After the holidays Kahn reported to his sister, “I met some wonderful people here. I spent the Holidays with these people, and no doubt a King could not be treated as Royal.” 114 A month later, Kahn again mentioned the couple: “I wrote to you, about the way I spent the Holidays, Well! These people just insist on taking up most of my spare time entertaining me and I can assure you that they do it too. I have never met such a hospitable and lovely couple. I enjoy their company a great deal.” 115 Unfortunately, Kahn did not use their names, and nothing else is known about his hosts. It is unclear whether he sought out local Jews, they sought him out, or a Jewish organization arranged their meeting. But it is apparent that their friendship and the chance to observe the holidays meant a great deal to him. 116

Historically, the region where Clermont-Ferrand is situated is significant; it is the location of the first documented synagogue in France and the first ketubah, dating from 1319. Three places testify to the town’s Jewish history: Rue Fontgiève (Fountain of the Jews), Hill of Monjuzet

114 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 20 September 1918.
115 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 6 October 1918.
116 This type of relationship was unusual; it was more common for the two peoples to find fault with each other. Rabbi Lee J. Levinger wrote in his World War I memoir, “A small minority of our men did penetrate into French life and grew to love it; a minority of the French made the acquaintance of Americans and came to respect them.” Levinger, Jewish Chaplain, 65. It seems likely that Kahn and the French couple found commonality in their Jewish ethnicity and social class. I still hope to find out something about the couple and how they came to invite Kahn to spend the holidays with them. Months later, while waiting for transport home, Kahn wrote of his continuing contact with the couple from Clermont-Ferrand, “I had another letter from my friends in Clermont [sic]. They send me cookies and cake etc. They are wonderful people. I cannot begin to describe my feeling toward them. I don’t presume I shall ever forget them.” Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 28 December 1918.
(Jewish mountain), and Rue du Faubourg des Juifs (area of the Jews). Over the centuries, the Jewish community has formed and re-formed several times. The first community arrived at the time of the Roman Legion. They were forced to flee or convert in 576, and the synagogue was destroyed. The community reconstituted in the thirteenth century but was expelled again in the fourteenth century. In 1780 a new community was established, and in 1808 it was recognized officially as an organized Jewish community. The Synagogue des Quatre-Passeports was established in 1862; by 1872, it had about one hundred members. The Association Culturelle Israelite de Clermont-Ferrand formed in 1906 and has remained the primary Jewish association in the city. Its mandate includes worship, public service, and representation of the Jewish community with the community-at-large. It is possible that Kahn met the “hospitable couple” though this association.

While Kahn seemed to enjoy his personal experiences, his letters show that he believed the military did not respect him. While in the training encampment, Kahn sought to be promoted from lieutenant to captain. He witnessed two doctors in his detachment promoted as well as doctors from his Chicago Jewish neighborhood. He was annoyed when, as he wrote to his sister, Ray, “I was informed to-day that I was too young to be promoted in the Medical Corps and have started a noise about it. I personally feel that any man that makes a statement of that sort is a ‘dam fool.’” Kahn, twenty-eight at the time, was about the


Ibid.

“Medical,” G.P.F Book, 358. For example, two doctors Kahn was in contact with, Daniel Leventhal and Joe Lebowitz, were both captains. Others returned home with promotions.

Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 20 September 1918. “Rank was a contentious subject for doctors; they wanted higher rank and status and (in a nutshell) the Army as a whole declined to value doctors as highly as doctors valued themselves. There were many facets to the problem since there were different types of officers’ commissions during the war (Regular Army, National Guard, and National Army to name the three main ones, but also Medical Reserve Corps and Officers’ Reserve Corps) and what was true right then may have been true for a brief moment.” Email from Sanders Marble to the author, 26 June 2017.
same age as other doctors he knew who had received promotions. It is unknown if Kahn made “noise” with his commanders and/or representatives back home. Whatever he did, he was not successful; he remained a lieutenant for the rest of his service.

As the months in France wore on, the subjects of Kahn’s letters changed slightly. Although he continued to be very concerned about the health of his family at home, his letters now shared observations about the French people and the war itself. In early October of 1918 he wrote of missing his nieces and nephew, then added, “Children are rarities here in France. The War being almost five years in this country the youngsters have grown up so that those of age were taken into the service, and the younger ones are now almost at the age limit.” As a doctor who attended to children in civilian life, he especially noted the lack of children in the cities around him. This letter reinforces that Kahn was not isolated in the military camp but free to observe local communities. After the war ended, he wrote: “I have never realized how fortunate we are to be Americans but after seeing other countries I can assure any American that he is living in luxury in U.S. even if he is the poorest man in the County.” Like many Americans he appreciated the historic sights of Europe, but he was shocked to see the effects of many years of war.

The Front and Other Perils

At the end of September, six weeks before the armistice, the 3rd Battalion finally left Beaumont for the artillery range near Randonne. This range provided training for all field artillery units. As part of the new 76th National Army Division, the 151st Artillery Brigade reached the range only after other units completed their training. After two months in France, Kahn happily announced to his family that his unit was finally away from their comfortable billets.

121 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 6 October 1918. Kahn was not alone in these sentiments. A common theme in men’s writings was the “devastation that the war had wrought” on the lives of French and British citizens. See Faulkner, Pershing’s Crusaders, 187.
122 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 17 December 1918.
123 G.P.F. Book, 27.
Our men went to the Guns [large artillery] a few days ago and seem to be doing fine. I had 26 new sick this a.m. but none of them very serious. I am the only Med. Officer in the Battalion and have plenty of work to keep me busy. Well, will save some news for some other time. My hands are very cold and so I’m going over to the kitchen to warm them.\footnote{Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 6 October 1918. These dates and weather match the period when the artillery moved from the plains to the Puy de Dôme mountain for artillery practice. According to Eddy Oziol, historian, Academy of Clermont-Ferrand, this is when the cold weather sets in. Email to author, 5 January 2018.}

As their medical officer, Kahn lived with the troops at the training site and began tending to those who were ill. It is likely that some of the newly ill suffered with influenza; the pandemic swept the world in the fall of 1918. Twenty-six men reporting sick in one day—more than 5 percent of the 450 men—was a high number for Kahn’s unit. Kahn chose not to mention the epidemic to his family.\footnote{Kahn’s sister, Ray Greenwald, suffered from influenza later that fall. Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 15 December 1918.} At the beginning of the outbreak, the military and doctors, including Kahn, probably did not understand the severity of the illness. It only became a “reportable disease” for doctors on 7 October 1918, the day after the above letter was written.\footnote{Faulkner, \textit{Pershing’s Crusaders}, 587–588.} According to Eddy Oziol, a historian of the Clermont-Ferrand region, “In October 1918 there was a terrible epidemic of … [influenza, which was very] contagious” in the local area.\footnote{Eddy Oziol, historian, Academy of Clermont-Ferrand, email to author, 5 January 2018.} Twenty members of the 303rd Field Artillery unit died and were buried at the Clermont-Ferrand American Cemetery during the three months they were stationed there, far from the dangers of the front lines.\footnote{According to Oziol, Kahn’s unit remained the healthiest of the three regiments stationed in the region. The other two regiments lost seventy and forty-eight men, respectively, during the same three months. Eddy Oziol, historian, Academy of Clermont-Ferrand. Email to author, 5 January 2018.} Oziol believes that many of the dead perished as a result of the epidemic.\footnote{Ibid.} The 1918 pandemic affected the young and strong.
more often than the elderly and young children.\textsuperscript{130} Approximately one in four AEF soldiers contracted influenza during the war; more Americans died due to influenza-related illness than were killed in combat.\textsuperscript{131}

At the same time Kahn was facing influenza in his unit, he described the primitive living conditions for his family, transforming the discomfort into an adventure:

Sister, our Regiment is in the field now, camping out. It’s a new and wonderful experience. We left our Billets on the first and are here a week now. We live in dog tents, sleep on the ground and its cold as “hell” up here, Eat in the open with frozen fingers, where water is frozen and the coffee gets cold before you get it to your lips. Awake in the a.m. and find your bed covered with snow. Its certainly is a wonderful and healthy way to live. Its living with nature sure.\textsuperscript{132}

This is a most interesting passage. It gives an accurate portrayal of the circumstances, describing the uncomfortable cold, but then putting the most upbeat interpretation on it as possible, calling the circumstances “healthy” and “wonderful.” Here he employed the tactic he confided to his sister-in-law at war’s end. Kahn wrote that he lied often to keep the family reassured that he was well, “sliding in and out of the truth,” so much so that he often forgot what he had written to whom.\textsuperscript{133} However, truth was never the goal of the correspondence; maintaining connections was.

During this time, family continued to be on Kahn’s mind. To his teenage niece, Leah, on October 24, less than three weeks before the war's end, he wrote “I’ve read all your letters to many of the officers here and they enjoy them as much as ever,”\textsuperscript{134} noting “We have a very

\textsuperscript{130} Faulkner, Pershing’s Crusaders, 587.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{132} Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 6 October 1918. For a description of tents and billets see Faulkner, Pershing’s Crusaders, 146–158.
\textsuperscript{133} Letter from Jacob Kahn to Bessie Kahn, 12 November 1918.
\textsuperscript{134} Letter from Jacob Kahn to Leah Greenwald, 24 October 1918.
sociable and bright set of officers in this Regiment.”¹³⁵ The camaraderie with his fellow officers grew in importance as they shared letters from home.¹³⁶ He gave his niece advice about her education:

I don’t want you to be angry at me for not writing you oftener, as I have been terribly busy and really did not get the chance to. . .Don’t you worry about geometry its easy and you can get through it easily. . .I am having a very nice time and enjoying army life immensely.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 29 July 1918.
¹³⁶ Kahn was more comfortable writing about his fellow officers with whom he most likely shared education and class than the enlisted men of the unit.
¹³⁷ Letter from Jacob Kahn to Leah Greenwald, 24 October 1918.
Kahn’s duties increased as his battalion prepared to move toward the front. He had less time for writing, and family must have seemed further away. This short excerpt reiterates two primary themes of the correspondence, interest in all matters of home life, and again, reassuring family of his wellbeing by the falsehood of “having a nice time,” to making his life sound like a vacation. What he did not want his family to know was that the men of the battalion were well aware of the horrific nature of the front. On 3 October, after witnessing deadly battles in St. Mihiel and Argonne, their colonel reported to the brigade and prepared the men for the combat ahead.\textsuperscript{138} It finally became time for the 303\textsuperscript{rd} Field Artillery to see the action; they boarded trains for the front on 1 November and headed for their new assignments.

While the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} Battalions of the 303\textsuperscript{rd} Field Artillery Regiment supported American divisions in the St. Mihiel sector, Kahn’s 3\textsuperscript{rd} Battalion separated from other American units on 4 November. During the final eight days of the war the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Battalion supported combat operations of the French 39\textsuperscript{th} Army.\textsuperscript{139} Stationed behind the infantry, they provided extensive fire support for the French advance to secure the sector near Bois de Haudronville. The 3\textsuperscript{rd} Battalion located the Germans by aircraft or balloon, then targeted enemy supply depots, railheads, railheads,

\textsuperscript{138} \textit{G.P.F.} Book, 27.
\textsuperscript{139} See https://www.abmc.gov/news-events/news/world-war-i-historic-reference-book-now-available-abmcgov#.Wc11y1tSZcv (scroll down to the lower section with the maps and select the St. Mihiel map) Paul W. Grasmehr, reference coordinator, Pritzker Military Museum & Library pointed out, “there is a sector of the line between the U.S. 33\textsuperscript{rd} Division and the U.S. 28\textsuperscript{th} Division, south of Jonville, that is the responsibility of a French division. It is my understanding that the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Battalion of the 303\textsuperscript{rd} Field Artillery Regiment is temporarily assigned to the operational control of that French division, the French 39\textsuperscript{th} Division, to provide additional fire support so it would be able to advance and clear that woods south of Jonville.” According to Grasmehr, “The U.S. generals on Pershing’s staff were not convinced the Germans would sue for peace. The phase of the operations that the 303\textsuperscript{rd} Field Artillery participated in the last week of the war had the goal of pressing their advance forward (from north to south) to capture Conflans-en-Jarnisy and Chambly on their drive toward Metz. The next phase of the advance would continue after several weeks or months to resupply and reorganize for the final offensive during the winter or early Spring 1919.” Email to author, 29 September 2017.
and road junctions about 10.4 miles away.\textsuperscript{140} This assignment proved treacherous, as it placed them within range of enemy artillery. As the American artillery succeeded in disrupting the enemy’s ability to resupply and reinforce their positions, they became “priority targets” for the enemy; the Germans in response fired back aggressively “with a mix of high explosive and gas shells.”\textsuperscript{141}

The battalion faced constant danger as enemy artillery rained down on them. Kahn described the scene: “3 days ago, they got next to us and began to raise ‘hell’ with us…. They located our positions and made us feel it. And until the last minute they gave us a strong counter-attack with result of a mustard gas shell casualty in our battalion as a finale.”\textsuperscript{142}

According to Paul W. Grasmehr, reference coordinator, Pritzker Military Museum & Library, Kahn “had a heavy burden on his shoulders; he was expected to perform a variety of leadership, administrative and medical tasks that were part of his daily responsibilities in maintaining the health of the men.” His job was to enable “the regiment to function smoothly, so that they could perform their combat role.”\textsuperscript{143} On the last day of the war, after the armistice on 11 November at 11:00 AM but before it was enforced, 2,738 men died and more than eight thousand were wounded on both sides.\textsuperscript{144}

\textbf{The Truth of War Revealed}

The day after the war’s final battle, Kahn sent letters to his sister and sister-in-law in Chicago, admitting his war-long deception. In these letters Kahn reveals fears that he had hidden from the family and admits that he had been lying about the degree of danger to which he had been

\textsuperscript{140} The brigade was equipped with the French G.P.F. Grande Portée Filloux, a long-range Filloux, and a trench mortar battery. The G.P.F. was invented by Lieutenant Colonel Filloux of the French Army. For more information see \textit{G.P.F Book}.
\textsuperscript{141} Paul W. Grasmehr, reference coordinator, Pritzker Military Museum & Library, in email to author, 29 September 2017.
\textsuperscript{142} Letter from Jacob Kahn to Bessie Kahn, 12 November 1918.
\textsuperscript{143} Paul W. Grasmehr, reference coordinator, Pritzker Military Museum & Library, in email to author, 29 September 2017.
\textsuperscript{144} Hochschild, \textit{To End All Wars}, 341.
exposed. These are the only letters where Kahn wrote of being in harm’s way. Both letters speak to his patriotism and his belief in God. However, while similar in their descriptions of the action at the front, the letters differed in tone and emphasis. The letter to his sister, Ray, is personal and shows concern about their father. The letter to his sister-in-law, Bess, is poetic and literary; it demonstrates biblical knowledge by quoting a verse from Psalm 23. This is a repeat of the style of the letters Kahn sent on his arrival in France. By comparing the two letters, below, the reader gains additional insight into the nature of family relationships.

Nov. 12, 1918 France
Dear Sister Ray.

It [is] all over now and thank God for that. Now is time enough to tell you the truth. I’ve told you all false hoods for such a long time that I feel that I must confess to the truth, now that I am alive, and we are victorious.

Dear Sister, death stared me in the eyes a million times during the past 30-40 days. Life has been miserable and absolutely worthless, and each time I thought I was going I thought of the folks at home, and how my death would affect Dad. But God has been with me, and I am now about to relate the truth, and am happy to say that I did all that any American could do for his country. My work was very hard for me, because my 3rd battalion was in a sacrifice position ever since we came, but in spite of it all, we came through it fine.

Our enemy put up a very strong counter attack (up to the last minute). At 10 a.m. yesterday our last casualty was a man struck by a mustard gas shell sent directly over our guns and closing the war.145

After telling his sister-in-law that much of what she read earlier was false, he wrote the following moving words:

November 12, 1918:
Dear Sister Bess:… During the past 41 days I’ve been directly in the shadow of death, and although many men have been lost here, have

145 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 12 November 1918. For a discussion of the effects of shells and shrapnel see Faulkner, *Pershing’s Crusaders*, 569.
given their bodies for a most noble cause, I am alive to-day, when Liberty rules the world, to repeat several of my sad adventures.

Bess, when we came here, we were selected as a sacrifice battalion, separated from our regiment and placed directly behind the Infantry to guard them in the trenches. A position of this sort is never taken by heavy artillery of our sort, but owing to the nature of the offensive, we were placed in this embarrassment to our joy. Anything to save a dough boy. They deserve all the credit in the world, but regret to say, that the newly entitled to honors in this war are not alive to receive them. This portion of ours was a camouflage to our enemy because they could not realize why we should assume such positions … and to our good fortune the war ended just in time to spare the lives of those that remain to hear the news of Peace. 146

According to Grasmehr, they might have felt like a sacrifice or “orphaned” battalion because they were separated from other American units and placed so close to the front. 147 As the war progressed, it was standard practice for battalions to be reassigned to other divisions with the American or Allied Armies.

Parts of Kahn’s letters of 12 November are problematic, as they do not match battalion history. According to the official record, Kahn’s battalion was near the battlefields for ten days and saw action for the last eight days of the war, not the thirty to forty days the letters recount. 148 What to make of the discrepancy? One possible explanation is that the letters were written the day after war’s end, and it could have seemed as if they had been under fire for much longer. Also, the battalion had been away from their Beaumont billets for several weeks, including time at the artillery range. The letters are a reminder of the unreliability of war letters, even when the emotions ring true.

146 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Bessie Kahn, 12 November 1918.
148 “The 303d FA Regiment left its training camp on 1 Nov. 1918. Enters combat operations on 2 Nov until 11 Nov. LT Kahn was not under fire for 41 days.” Leonid Kondratiuk, director, Historical Services, The Adjutant General’s Office, Massachusetts.
After admitting his falsehoods and telling his heroic tales, Kahn continued with a description of the army’s plans for him for the coming weeks. But even in these letters, he remembers to end with something light and reassuring. To his sister he writes,

Sister, I am going to get for now. We are leaving for Germany in 48 hours. We are only 10 miles from Metz and are going to hike this. From here I think we are going to Cologne in northern Germany to guard the border. From now on my work is going to be very light and pleasurable. I expect I might get a chance to go to London now and the Folks. I’ll see Berlin for sure.

Saving some of my troubles for a future time and wishing to thank you, Leah and all my dear relatives for keeping me happy with mail from home, I am

Your loving brother
Jacob

To his sister-in-law, he is less effusive, but still careful not to end with anything upsetting.

Bess, must save some of the news for another time. All I wish to say is that within 48 hours will be on our way to Cologne in Northern Germany where we will station for about 6 months. We march to Metz (10 miles) then by train to destination my address remains unchanged. Keep on writing.

However, Kahn did not visit London or go to Germany. Instead, his brigade remained in France. A little more than two weeks after war’s end, families in the United States and the members of the AEF overseas celebrated Thanksgiving. This year, all indulged. Kahn wrote from Varvinay:

AEF France Nov. 28, 1918
Dear Sister:
    To-day is Thanksgiving Day, and no doubt you are celebrating it as wonderfully as we are. I presume that we will have two of these Holidays in November hereafter the usual and the 11th day of the month. We are having a big time to-day. Eats—drinks and amusements—including contests and fireworks....
Trust you are all well, regards to everyone. Jacob

**A Sad and Slow Homecoming**

Now that the war was over, Kahn’s letters read like travelogues. Americans often spoke in awe of the age and historical significance of the buildings and churches—visited by Joan of Arc, kings, and other dignitaries from their history books—but also noted the lack of modernity of the people who used carts instead of wagons. Because of these observations, Kahn was “really surprised when [he] saw real electric cars [in Nancy].” Like other American soldiers, he commented on women doing what had formerly been considered to be men’s work. A month after the armistice, Kahn wrote that all had not returned to pre-war status, as women remained in the male jobs of “motoring and conductors,” something that was unusual for 1918. As members of the AEF spent more time away from army mess halls, they sought out and meticulously recorded the specifics of abundant and unfamiliar foods. French meals became a significant feature of letters and diaries. To his sister, Kahn described his holiday, calling Nancy “a very beautiful city” and listing in mouth-watering detail his first French meal:

I met two American nurses there and had a real honest dinner…. An experience so rare that I’ve almost forgotten how to act. I must tell you what I had to eat[:] one dozen oysters, Fillet de Sole with French salad dressing—1/4 spring chicken, French fried potatoes and some sort of puffed potatoes, steak and mushrooms—spinach cauliflowers—fresh peas—Vegetable Salad (everything from weeds to grass in it) Oranges—apples—nuts—Coffee, Champaign and Beer. It was the first time since my arrival overseas that I have seen so much food in one place at one time.

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149 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 28 November 1918. The army held a religious service and holiday dinner. *G.P.E Book*, 27.
150 Ibid., 206–207.
152 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 17 December 1918.
154 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 17 December 1918.
From the amount of food Kahn ordered, he must have been famished. Obviously not kosher, this is the first meal in which Kahn mentions seafood or meat. This could be because the army’s meat was not worthy of a letter home. Bad cooking would have been only part of the problem; many American men reported weight loss, as the army’s lack of preparedness affected the food supply line. Ten days after the Nancy letter, Kahn wrote: “Am having the most wonderful trips, Enjoying every minute of the day and nights. I do absolutely no work and only travel via machine to enjoy all the surrounding country. I’ve seen France from one end to the other South-North East-West and feel satisfied that I can say with little exception that I’ve seen all of France.”

But as Kahn was finishing his wartime service and experiencing some well-deserved travel, unbeknownst to him his family back home was experiencing sadness and loss. Just as Kahn had shielded his family from knowledge that might distress them, they had been doing the same for him. In truth, his father in Chicago had been quite sick, and Kahn, unaware of this, became a carefree tourist. It was during these travels that his father died. Kahn wrote to Ray on 28 December that he was disappointed that he had not received a letter from her recently but, as the battalion readied for the embarkation point, he was looking forward to seeing the entire family soon. Ray, his constant correspondent, had not been able to bring herself to tell Kahn of their father’s illness and death, so the task of informing him fell on his brother. On 29 December Kahn received a cablegram from his brother, Louis, with the devastating news that his father had died on 20 December.

Filled with sadness and guilt at not being there to assist his father in his final days, Kahn expressed impatience with the military for the long wait for a ship home:

155 Kennedy, Over Here, 209.
156 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 28 December 1918.
157 Kennedy, Over Here, 205.
158 “[The battalion has] turned in all guns-equipment and medical and surgical supplies and orders read that we move as soon as our material is accepted and signed over.” Letter, Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 28 December 1918. Date confirmed in G.P.F. Book, 29.
I’ve been very, very grieved since I received Louis’s cablegram about our sad, indeed very sad misfortune. But dear sister, our dear Dad did suffer so during the past months I am certain he suffered terribly and feel sure that God will provide for our dear Dad for all his good—his kindness, his charity and especially his love and care for his children....

I do wish I was home. I am heart stricken to think that any such thing could happen in my absence, especially with me so far away absolutely unable to come to my dear and beloved Father in his last hours....

Oh how I wish I was home. If I could only get there at once, I would be more able to appreciate what has happened.... [I] sit here like crazy trying to find a way to get home, and praying to God, to reward my dear Father for all his great traits and love for his Family.

Dear Sister write me about all that happened You never even wrote that Dad was worse....

Love to all. Jacob\textsuperscript{159}

By 10 January the 151st Field Artillery Brigade arrived near the Bordeaux port, but they did not board the \textit{Santa Rosa} for home until April. Kahn grew restless:

Jan. 19, 1919
Dear Sister Ray.
Just a few lines to let you know that I am feeling well and trust that you all are the same.
I am in no mood for writing letters … receiving the Sad news from home and Know you will pardon me. I am terribly anxious to get home. So anxious that if a boat does not come in soon I will go a.w.o.l. and swim or fly....

The embarkation officer informs me that he does not expect ship (passenger) in for 2–3 weeks yet, but that I am to sail on the first available transport.

With love to you all, and awaiting very impatiently and very anxiously to see you, I remain
Your loving brother
Jacob\textsuperscript{160}

\textsuperscript{159} Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 1 January 1919.
\textsuperscript{160} Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 19 January 1919.
No longer needing to sound positive for his family, Kahn confided to his sister: “I feel that I have done my duty, and my bit; suffered my allowance and taken my share of risks, now I want to be relieved and get back to where life is worth while.”\textsuperscript{161}

As the wait for a ship home continued, the brigade received an inspection and review by General Pershing, himself. The 151\textsuperscript{st} was deemed “one of the finest brigades he had ever inspected.”\textsuperscript{162} Kahn’s unit also received honors from the French government; they presented the Lorraine campaign steamer to the 303\textsuperscript{rd} Field Artillery Regiment for its support of French troops.

Kahn had been promised a ship home by January; however, this was not to be. Men became bored, and the YMCA and army organized activities, classes, and sporting events to entertain them. The army also staged mock battles, all to fight boredom and keep the men busy.\textsuperscript{163} Most of these activities were designed for the troops, not doctors. Kahn continued to have nothing to do but wait.

After three months of delays, Kahn seemed resigned to the wait. The impatience of January, when he was overwhelmed with grief for his father and desperate to be with his family, had passed, and he had developed more empathy for his fellow soldiers. As he sat in the beautiful port city, he realized that other men might also have a pressing need to be home.

March 29, 1919
Dear Sister Ray.

Something has come over me that inspires me to writing letters. It’s the 1\textsuperscript{st} time I’ve felt this way since Christmas time. What it is I cannot say, but I surely am feeling fine these past few days. Perhaps because we are on the western coast and only 25 feet from the ocean waters and may be not that but the thought of assuredness that my wish and desire for getting home is going to be a reality. A boat left today and took about 1000 men out of the country for N.Y. I was glad to see the boys go, for

\textsuperscript{161} Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 17 December 1918.
\textsuperscript{162} G.P.F. Book, 29. Pershing inspected the brigade on 28 February 1919.
\textsuperscript{163} Kennedy, Over Here, 206.
I’m certain that they are many amongst them that are as anxious to get home as I am. Being in a position as I am in here I think I can say that perhaps some of those poor fellows have even more urgent reasons for getting home than I and the Lord knows I have plenty.

But he was not always able to sustain that level of patience and empathy. His letter continued:

Regardless of our own sorrows and domestic distress we are urged under circumstances to wait our turn which no doubt is perhaps a fair and good motto. Many of the men exaggerate their worries a great deal and many who have none claim to have an over abundance. Until conditions become so uncertain that even the honest man is not believed.

Still adjusting to the reality of his father’s death, he was also concerned about what the future would hold for the family without his father at the head of the seder table.

We were to sail on Jan 9th and we are still here. Wishing you are all in good health and a pleasant Pasach, although I know it will be saddest and most unpleasant “Seder” we have ever had, and I’m sure we will never be able to enjoy our “Seders” as we have here-to-fore-, I am Your loving brother Jacob

Kiss all the children for me.164

Kahn did not state how he would observe the holiday. Beyond the holiday, the letter goes on to discuss his immediate concerns about where he, his mother, and his unmarried sister would live. Issues such as this not only affected the family, but where he would reestablish his medical practice. However, because he was overseas, other family members made decisions for him. His return home would be the beginning of his new role as family caregiver, without the assistance of his father, but for now he could only participate in matters at home via letters.

The 151st Field Artillery Brigade finally reached Boston on 25 April. Six months after the war’s end, Kahn mustered out of his country’s service and quickly headed home to reunite with his family and medical

164 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Ray Greenwald, 29 March 1919.
practice. He spent the rest of his professional life in his local South Chicago community as a respected doctor and a community pillar. However, his overseas experiences had enlarged his world and expanded his interest in seeing other countries. When he left home for a world voyage in the 1920s, he sent home colorful letters from each exotic port. Because of his WWI service, he journeyed as an experienced traveler and as an American patriot.

Conclusion

“Linked by Letters” describes the fragile communication between families worried at home and their loved ones in the military. Throughout the years, the yearning for mail is one of the most common themes in American war correspondence. Kahn ended most of his letters with “keep on writing” or the subtler “my address remains.” Kahn's friend, Joe Lebowitz, also a doctor stationed in France, wrote to their common correspondent Bessie Kahn: “Letters are the most welcome things we eat in this part of the world. Things that are trivial at home are received here with great interest.” He ended the letter with a request for her to keep writing and to enlist her sisters to write as well. All who could hold a pen established another link to home.

Although every soldier had an individual story to tell and all faced different obstacles, their letters shared an universal theme. The quest for news of family and friends always remained urgent. For Kahn, his priorities did not change as the year progressed. Of prime importance was always the health and well-being of his family, especially his father. As time went on, Kahn also gained appreciation for his fellow soldiers;

165 “Reminisces About the Late Dr. Kahn,” Chicago Daily Calumet (10 March 1959): 2.
166 Dr. Kahn traveled around the world with two other doctors. They joined the early-twentieth-century American tourist boom. Melissa R. Klapper, “The Great Adventure of 1929: The Impact of Travel Abroad on American Jewish Women’s Identity” American Jewish History 102, no. 1 (January, 2018): 86.
168 Letter from Jacob Kahn to Bessie Kahn, 12 November 1918.
169 Letter from Joe Lebowitz to Bessie Kahn, 27 July 1917.
this too was reflected in his letters. However, the main themes of his letters endured: his good health and safety, his family, patriotism, and his desire for further correspondence.170

An unanswered question is how the continuous correspondence with men overseas affected personal connections. Not only were family members evaluating and reevaluating what elements of their lives to share, but they were also constantly worrying about the safety of their soldiers. Although men as well as women were concerned about their family and friends in the military, gender may have played a role, as mothers, wives, and sisters especially sought assurances that all was well. 171 Family on both sides of the ocean needed assurance about the physical well-being of their loved ones, whether true or not. War letters, like all correspondence, reflected what the authors wanted their correspondents to know. They are not histories or even diaries, but writing meant to provide a link between a soldier and a child, wife, parent, sibling, or friend at home. The content of letters varied from correspondent to correspondent, but for the soldiers overseas and the family at home it was the act of receiving a letter that was important. Therefore, the power of a letter lay not in its contents but in its reassurance that the link remained intact.

For a historian, war letters play a different role. Soldiers’ letters provide a layer of descriptions and emotions on the bare bones of military histories. Beyond dates and maps, letters can indicate feelings and practices, even if they contain unreliable information. As primary documents they must be questioned and placed in context. An author’s divergence from the truth forces the historian to delve into other sources to confirm or reject content.

170 Lebowitz, Kahn’s cousin, although also a doctor, arrived much earlier and worked in a large hospital rather than serving a mobile unit. Lebowitz’s letters reflected his personality. Although they were written to the same family members back home, they were more conversational, discussed baseball and food from home, and expressed feelings freely. He told his brother, after the war ended, he could now read descriptive letters to their parents. These letters had been withheld from them so they would not worry. Letter from Joe Lebowitz to Abe Lebowitz, 17 November 1918. In posession of author.

171 Carroll, War Letters, 36.
What can we take away from these letters? A greater understanding of an American Jewish family’s relationships, values, and practices. Family members were tested; all learned whom they could rely on. In Kahn’s case, his letters revealed not truths, necessarily, but insights into the interworking of an American Jewish family during the pressure cooker of war. His letters demonstrate the love he had for his family. They also demonstrate what military life was like for a Jewish doctor: not as a war hero or an immigrant, but as an example of the emerging inclusion of Jews into American life.

Kahn’s letters never spoke of antisemitism—no ethnic slur or religious discrimination he encountered in the military. It’s questionable, however, whether that’s an accurate portrayal. If he did encounter such prejudice, one reason for not writing about it might be to protect his family from that knowledge. It is also possible that he suspected sharing such experiences would be frowned upon; although war letters discussed private matters, everyone was aware that military censors could scrutinize their correspondence. Kahn’s Judaism was not a secret; he accepted furloughs for the High Holidays. But his educated class and native birth may have separated him from some of the discrimination that affected many non-English-speaking immigrants in the AEF. His ethnicity was not necessarily assumed, and he identified with the officers and other professionals.

Serving in the military helped define what it meant to be an American Jew. It reinforced patriotism and forced companionship with men beyond their neighborhoods and in turn educated others about American Jews. Historian Christopher M. Sterba summed it up: “Service overseas was a point of honor for most [ethnic Americans] and bound them

172 As noted earlier, Kahn was never promoted. It is possible that this was due to antisemitism; however, Kahn knew Jewish doctors who became captains.
closer to their homes in America than ever before.” 175 For Kahn, being a patriotic American and a Jew went hand in hand.

The Jewish Welfare Board (JWB) also held this belief. The JWB worked to place Judaism on equal footing with other major American religions. 176 For them, “American values demanded, and good citizenship required, the free expression of religious differences among men.” 177

During World War I, the JWB set a new standard of inclusion for the American military. 178 General Pershing also recognized the service of American Jews. He wrote: “When the time came to serve their country under arms … no class of people served with more patriotism or with higher motives than the young Jews who volunteered or were drafted and went overseas with our other young Americans to fight the enemy.” 179

As Jessica Cooperman concluded, the military in World War I laid the groundwork for religious pluralism in American life; this type of pluralism developed more universally in the 1940s and 1950s. 180

Many American Jewish soldiers experienced World War I as transnationals. They might have been born in the United States; however, like immigrant soldiers, they had strong ties to relatives in Europe and elsewhere. Kahn had multiple overlapping identities. He was at once an American soldier, the child of European Jews, and a part of the wider Jewish Diaspora. He felt a kinship with the French Jews with whom he spent the Jewish holidays; at the same time, he developed respect for the officers and doughboys with whom he served. In this way, Kahn exemplified the idea of being both an American patriot and an American Jew.

Shortly after the war ended Raymond Fosdick, chairman of the U.S. War Department’s Commission on Training Camp Activities, exclaimed

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175 Sterba, *Good Americans*, 176.
176 Under the auspices of the Commission on Training Camp Activities, they established themselves in many military camps in the United States and France and provided Jewish chaplains, prayer books, and holiday services.
178 Ibid.
to the members of the Jewish War Board that in the military camps, “The fences have disappeared; the sectarian lines have vanished.”  
While that may have been the case in some activities, this was a little too optimistic for American society in general. The postwar decades produced the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, the Red Scare, and immigration restrictions. Patriotism after the war took on layers of complexity. During the 1920s Congress passed immigration quotas that effectively blocked Jewish immigration from Europe to the United States.  
This made it difficult, if not impossible, for more of Kahn’s extended family to unite in Chicago. Like many others, Kahn’s parents would have been unwelcome in the United States after 1924.  
The immigration legislation was just one of several examples of nativism and xenophobia that greeted Kahn and other veterans in the postwar years. Even though all met and worked with men from many nationalities and religious affiliations, the war did not conquer all discrimination.  
Jewish war veterans believed that they had earned the right to insist on equal treatment for Jews. A Jewish War Veteran flier read, “As American defenders, we feel we are privileged and can demand that the Jew be not discriminated against, and shall have his rightful place in the sun.”   
This was not always the case.  
The end of World War I was a watershed moment that reverberated long after the armistice was reached. To Kahn and other veterans, 11 November became a holy day. Just as he always stopped to picnic on the Fourth of July, on 11 November at 11:00 AM, Kahn always stopped to call his niece, Leah, his teenage correspondent. He started the tradition at the armistice in 1918 and continued it until his death in 1959. According to Leah’s daughter, Kahn even managed to call his niece on

181 Ibid., 237.
183 Faulkner, Pershing’s Crusaders, 238, 407–409.
184 Ibid., 239; Laskin, Long Way Home, 333–334.
185 Sterba, Good Americans, 209.
186 The son of a Jewish veteran remembered that “November 11 was like Yom Kipper—always an important day.” Laskin, Long Way Home, 331.
11/11 from France.\(^{187}\) For Lieutenant Jacob V. Kahn, patriotism and family remained always intertwined.

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\(^{187}\) Dorothy Kay Schwartz, email to author, 28 February 2018. Kahn donated his body to the University of Southern California medical school.

“Justice, justice, thou shalt pursue!” Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the sixth of eight Jewish Supreme Court justices, says this biblical command—which she displays in her chambers—“is a strand that ties” her to her Jewish predecessors. Justices Stephen Breyer and Elena Kagan, the seventh and eighth Jewish justices, have expressed their public connection to Judaism differently. Breyer has noted the influence on his career of Rabbi Hillel’s teaching, “If I am not for myself, who am I for?” while Kagan is the first Jewish justice to explicitly invoke early American Jewish history in an opinion. What else unites the Jewish justices? In what ways have their journeys to the bench and their connections to Judaism differed? What impact have the Jewish justices had on the court and in American Jewish life? And perhaps more fundamentally, is there a need for a book about Jewish justices?

Historian and Rabbi David G. Dalin addresses these questions and more. His collective biography, *Jewish Justices of the Supreme Court: From Brandeis to Kagan, Their Lives and Legacies*, is the first book to examine all eight Jewish jurists, and it does so in a remarkably lively narrative of fewer than three hundred pages of text. An additional sixty-five pages of notes and selected bibliography evidence the breadth and depth of well-chosen secondary sources the author has mined for this telling.

In terms of organization, Dalin underscores the historic importance of President Wilson’s 1916 appointment of Louis D. Brandeis, the nation’s first Jewish justice, by delaying its telling. Before then, Dalin sets the stage in the first chapter by surveying the earliest presidential appointments of Jews to diplomatic and other federal posts. From President Madison’s 1813 ill-fated appointment of Mordecai Noah as
U.S. counsel to Tunis (who was recalled due to antisemitic protests by the country's Muslim rulers), to President Taft’s 1910 appointment of Julian Mack (co-founder of the American Jewish Committee and first Jewish federal judge who served on the appellate court until his death in 1943), Dalin highlights each person’s contributions to overcoming barriers to Jewish participation in American life and governance.

Against this backdrop, Dalin then examines the early years, private lives, and court careers—including the most significant jurisprudence on religious issues—of each Jewish justice in chronological turn. He allot one chapter each to Benjamin Cardozo, Arthur Goldberg, and Abe Fortas (who served on the Supreme Court six, three, and four years, respectively); he separately examines the early lives and twenty-three-year Supreme Court careers of Brandeis and Felix Frankfurter in two chapters apiece. Even in Dalin's succinct account, it is difficult to imagine confining to one chapter either Brandeis (considered one of the most influential Supreme Court justices ever and the only American Jew for whom a university has been named) or Frankfurter (legal mastermind of the New Deal who helped Chief Justice Earl Warren forge a unanimous court to strike down segregated public schools in Brown v. Board of Education). In the ninth and final chapter, Dalin combines his portrayal of the three sitting Jewish justices, weaving Breyer’s and Kagan’s stories with those of the iconic Ginsburg, who has earned the affectionate moniker, “Notorious RBG.”

In all of these portraits, Dalin explores each justice’s “Jewishness”: a multifaceted lens through which the author touches upon Judaic ancestry, religious education, ritual observance during life and at death, synagogue membership and attendance, communal leadership, antisemitic experiences, and support of Zionism. Dalin marshals a wealth of biographical detail that enables the reader to appreciate the experiences that shaped, and the practices that reveal, the Jewish identity each justice brings to the Supreme Court.

Together, Dalin's judicial portraits illustrate the rich history, diversity, and, indeed, the complexity of the broader American Jewish experience. Consider, for example, just a few snippets of what Dalin writes about Brandeis and Cardozo, who served six years together on the Supreme Court. Highly assimilated, Kentucky-born Brandeis, whose
German-speaking parents fled Prague’s antisemitism, discovered his passion for Zionism mid-life; his funeral service, which included neither Jewish prayers nor a rabbi, preceded his cremation. Cardozo, who likely would have described himself as a “non-observant Orthodox Jew,” was born into New York’s Sephardic Jewish community and remained throughout his life a devoted, dues-paying member (albeit infrequent attendee) of the synagogue in which he became a bar mitzvah. Yet, during their time together on the Supreme Court, throughout which they jointly endured the antisemitic animosity of fellow justice James McReynolds, Dalin relates that Cardozo and Brandeis “differed too fundamentally in their Jewishness for it to unite them” socially.

Like many American Jews who sought entry and advancement in once-restricted professions such as law, Frankfurter and Fortas generally experienced their Judaism as an “obstacle to overcome.” For other justices, their expressions of Judaism—Goldberg’s leadership in the Jewish Theological Seminary while he was on the court, Ginsburg’s mezuzah on her chambers door, Kagan’s attendance of High Holy Days services at a Conservative synagogue—manifest as a celebrated heritage.

Dalin vividly relates episodes that demonstrate the justices’ menschlichkeit in opening doors to the legal profession for Jews and other minorities. Notable examples include Frankfurter’s hiring of the Supreme Court’s first African American law clerk in 1948 and Goldberg’s expression of willingness to insist that his fellow justices waive the rule against hats to permit Orthodox Jewish women to argue before the court (although Dalin fails to note whether a situation requiring this waiver has ever arisen). At the same time, readers will wince at Dalin’s account of his subjects’ faults, such as Frankfurter’s failure to use his considerable influence (which he otherwise wielded in political matters without concern for judicial ethics) to urge President Roosevelt to bomb Auschwitz, and his refusal to interview, much less hire, Ginsburg to be his law clerk because she was a woman. Dalin also does not pull punches in relating the ultimate public shandah, or disgrace, by a Jewish Supreme Court justice: Fortas’s resignation for accepting, while on the bench, a large retainer from investor Louis Wolfson, who was under federal investigation.

_Jewish Justices_ reminds (or informs) the reader how much the nation and the legal profession have evolved: from the once-unimaginable idea
of a Jewish justice; to the creation of a “Jewish seat” on the bench, filled for fifty-three years by Cardozo, Frankfurter, Goldberg and Fortas; to that seat’s eventual demise. “Today the once-traditional Jewish seat is no more,” observes Dalin. “Yet, with three Jews serving simultaneously in the centennial year of Brandeis’s appointment, it would seem unimaginable to many, within the Jewish community and without, that there could be a Supreme Court without a Jewish justice.” Indeed, despite the unrelenting partisan opposition to President Obama’s nomination of Merrick Garland, who would have been the ninth Jewish justice, Dalin correctly notes, “His Jewish identity seemed to be irrelevant; there was almost no media discussion of it at all.” Notwithstanding these advances, Dalin leaves the reader to ponder when and whether there will be a place on the Supreme Court for a Jewish justice who observes the Sabbath or wears a hat.

*Jewish Justices* does not, and does not try to, replace the in-depth biographies and scholarly treatises Dalin cites as sources. It may, however, prompt curious readers to discover or return to them. In addition to its natural appeal for Jewish lawyers and law students, *Jewish Justices* is an important, engaging, and concise resource for any reader interested in Jewish, American or legal history.

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Attention to masculinity within the field of American Jewish history has lagged behind trends in American history more broadly. Groundbreaking histories focusing on masculinity in North America appeared more than twenty years ago. If anything, the field has lost
momentum of late, with the word “masculinity” less often incorporated into book titles or conference panels. Yet Sarah Imhoff rightly turns our attention to the importance of attending to masculinity as a shaping force in modern American Jewish history. Her book represents a long-overdue correction, at last offering a deeply researched account both of how ideals of masculinity shaped Judaism and of how Jewishness participated in the construction of masculine norms in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Imhoff divides the book into three thematic sections, which consider the co-constitution of Jewishness and masculinity in three key areas: religious life, ideals of bodies and of land, and criminality. Each chapter within those parts considers a discrete, well-chosen case study, illuminating an iteration of the section’s main themes. This organizational format is easy to follow, although it results in significant repetition of phrases and examples among the introductions to the book, the sections, and the chapters.

The book is rich in original arguments. Imhoff demonstrates the ways in which ideals of gender and Jewish religion shaped one another—how they “co-constituted” each other. She argues that in the early twentieth century, leaders of American Judaism self-consciously endeavored to prove that Judaism was a “reasonable” and universalistic faith, consonant with the Enlightenment ideals of the American Protestant mainstream. Like Protestants, acculturated Jews gendered these qualities of rationality and universality as masculine. In this way, Imhoff argues, they drew on ideals of masculinity to demonstrate that Judaism was an American religion. Imhoff adds to the scholarship on masculinity by providing evidence of its pluralities—that Jewish masculinity was simultaneously appreciated as evidence of Jew’s suitability to American democracy, and that it was distinctive. American Jews celebrated a different constellation of masculine traits compared to their non-Jewish peers: the Jewish masculine ideal included self-sufficiency, courage, and health, but it did not prioritize physical strength, aggression, or domination. Indeed, her chapter examples show how much dissention there was among Jews themselves over the relationship between bodily strength and Jewish masculinity. The tension between the ideal of the gentle (male) scholar and the hearty (male) pioneer indicates that beyond differences between
Jewish and gentile ideals of masculinity, American Jews themselves prioritized a variety of manly traits.

In Part I, a chapter that focuses on the masculinity of Jewish converts to Christianity (sometimes called Hebrew Christians) offers one of the book’s most original and intellectually exciting case studies. She finds that these converts (many of whom became Christian missionaries to other Jews), rather than deriding a stereotype of the feminized Jewish man, celebrated Jewish ideals of men who were gentle, long-suffering, and learned.

Part II, which considers three case studies about Jewish ideals of the masculine body and the Jewish relationship to land, again provides aptly chosen case studies—the Galveston movement’s attempts to resettle European Jews as farmers in the American West, American Jewish attitudes toward Native Americans, and early American Zionism. In each instance, she sees a working out of the combined projects of asserting that Judaism is rational and universal (and thus, it was thought, suitable to American religious life), and that American masculinity encompassed Jewish ideals that differed from Protestant ones.

Part III’s case studies of Jewish criminality and violence focus on three well-chosen episodes—the 1908 Bingham report on Jewish criminality, the 1913 Leo Frank trial and lynching, and the murder trial of Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb in 1924—to argue that Jews who might have valued masculine bodily strength nevertheless believed that “using that strength aggressively or violently was beyond the bounds of that Jewish masculinity” (200). Here as elsewhere, Imhoff discusses the attitudes of Jews and non-Jews simultaneously, arguing that violence was so outside the norm of their perceptions of Jewish masculinity that they found the violence of some Jewish men difficult to comprehend. As a result, they described Jewish men’s violence, such as the gruesome murder perpetrated by Leopold and Loeb, as a consequence of their sexual abnormality. Particularly interesting are the ways in which these chapters demonstrate how emerging ideals of “good” religion shaped and were shaped by ideals of “good” gender and sexuality. Here again Imhoff finds Jews and non-Jews in agreement that Jewish masculinity contained a set of norms different from gentile norms, tending more toward gentleness than aggression. Her attention to Leopold and Loeb is
significant considering, as she notes, that very few articles which covered the sensational case mentioned the men’s Jewishness. Rather than challenging assumptions about Jewish masculinity, she finds, the Leopold and Loeb case affirmed them, because Jews described the murderers as beyond the pale of Jewishness. Scholars of these events will find much to debate among Imhoff’s provocative claims, but these are fruitful—and long overdue—debates for the field to have about the interrelated constructions of normative Jewishness, sexuality, and citizenship.

In the book’s lengthy introduction, Imhoff asserts that her book is not a work of history because it does not show change over time, but surely she is aware that many works of historical investigation consider a particular issue in depth, as hers does, during a particular era. Whatever the author’s qualms about identifying her book as such, this project is a work of history, and a highly credible one at that.

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American Jewry: A New History, Eli Lederhendler’s panoramic new survey, conveys the mastery and depth of insight one would expect from this wide-ranging and prolific scholar. As would any worthwhile work of intellectual synthesis, Lederhendler’s book creates new cloth out of threads pulled from decades of historical observation. He calls upon a mind-bogglingly vast library of monographs and essays and sends interested readers, through his footnotes, to central scholarly works in countless subfields and related areas of study. Weaving in his own research,
observations, and interpretations of historical sources and data, he offers illustrative political, demographic, economic, and cultural evidence that spans from the seventeenth century to the current millennium.

Warning the reader at the outset that his book is “only a selective version of the recorded past”—though what history isn’t?—Lederhendler proceeds with a (mostly) chronological investigation of the internal contradictions that constitute American Jews’ insider/outsider experience. The concept that American Jews are and always have been both a part of and apart from the mainstream is his story’s organizing principle, and he advances it through four major themes. The spatial settings of American Jewish life serves as one of the four. Lederhendler focuses on Jewish immigrants’ tendency to gravitate toward cities, the most protean of American spaces. These sites of constant movement and transformation influenced every aspect of American Jewish culture, while also providing Jews an arena where they would play a role in shaping American society. Lederhendler reminds the reader that the local specificities of any particular city—its racial and ethnic demography, its economic reliance on industry or commerce, its region and attendant political leanings—cultivated diversity among and within American Jewish urban communities. At the same time, he argues, Jews’ general urbanity “fostered … a coherent set of lifestyles” (36) across the American Jewish population. Some of these practices, especially the tendency to residentially cluster around ethnoreligious institutions, even traveled with them when they left the cities for the suburbs.

The second theme of the book is the “human variable,” a broad term Lederhendler applies to the internal diversities and divisions to be found within any ethnic group. Some of these divisions—such as those determined by place of origin or linguistic and liturgical practices—predate migration. Others, however, develop within and are amplified by their American contexts. Jewish political inclinations have never been monolithic, as they emerged from the various realities of Jewish experience in different economic sectors and social environments. Add the idiosyncrasies of individual temperament and preference to the mix, and any account of “American Jewish politics” gets a lot harder to pin down.

American Jewish self-representation, through art, politics, and religious discourse, constitutes the book’s third theme. Lederhendler
incorporates both cultural and structural explanations into both of these avenues of inquiry, though he makes clear his preference for structural accounts of American Jewish activity, particularly in their acts of self-representation. He dismisses efforts to find trans-historical Jewish “authenticity” in any particular cultural artifact or political ideal, insisting instead that ideas about what constitutes the American Jewish “character” are cultural constructions, forged within their contexts.

A fourth theme, and the only one granted its own discrete chapter, investigates the unusually persistent nature of American Jews’ connections with Jews in other countries. Unlike other immigrant groups in the United States, Lederhendler writes, American Jews, both foreign- and native-born, have expressed solidarity not only with the Jews still living in the nations and regions they came from, but with Jews in places throughout the Diaspora, beyond their direct kinship ties, memories, or even linguistic affinities. This “geography of collective memory” has decisively shaped American Jewish life, driving the creation of the few group leadership organizations that have spanned the chasms of Jewish denominational or ethnonational difference. Elsewhere in the book, Lederhendler goes to great lengths to puncture exceptionalist Jewish claims, pointing to similarities between Jewish behaviors and those of other Americans. But pan-Jewish solidarity, he writes, “illustrate[s] the qualitative distinctiveness of the American Jewish experience” (195). By contrast, other ethnic groups’ transnational connections have been limited to their lands of emigration. It’s worth pointing out that Pan-Africanism among black Americans might be regarded as a movement with significant parallels. Still, he convincingly argues that the transnational nature of Jews’ concerns for their co-religionists’ well-being abroad has proved “an essential attribute of Jews’ ‘otherness’” in their American setting (191).

These four themes provide the book’s only real methodological constraints. Considering the breadth and elasticity of each theme, and how widely and exhaustively Lederhendler draws from every possible aspect of American Jewish history, it is hard to determine any real parameters. No aspect of the American Jewish experience falls outside his framework. Everyone is here: urbanites, suburbanites, and Jewish farmers; rabbis and business operators; the religious and the secular; songwriters, novelists, and movie makers; political leaders and alienated intellectuals. This does
have its drawbacks, in light of how much material he packs into just over three hundred pages; the narrative rarely stays in one place for long. But it has its advantages, too, as Lederhendler interweaves his themes and makes connections that are powerfully thought-provoking.

*American Jewry: A New History* provides a sharp and stimulating overview of American Jewish history. But who is its intended reader? Though felicitously written, it is informationally dense, and it proceeds through 350 years of history quite quickly; it is the sort of scholarly text best assimilated and appreciated by readers with a more than passing acquaintance with the subject. Those readers might even have acquired that knowledge through Lederhendler’s other writings, where some of this book’s main claims and avenues of inquiry have already appeared. Still, admirers of Lederhendler’s work will surely appreciate the concise summary and thematic ingenuity that *American Jewry* proffers. And without question, readers who already know this history but seek to be guided through it by one of the field’s most sagacious, heterodox, and reflective practitioners will gain a great deal from this book.

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Some years ago, I was introduced to the story of Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler in Beth Abelson Macleod’s *Women Performing Music: The Emergence of American Women as Classical Instrumentalists and Conductors*. “A Paderewski in Petticoats,” the chapter devoted to Bloomfield-Zeisler, provided an intriguing biographical sketch of this nineteenth-century Jewish woman pianist. Needless to say, I was delighted to find *Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler: The Life and Times of a Piano Virtuoso*, a book-length account of her life.
Above all, Macleod could have titled the book *Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler in Context*, because in a clear and consistent manner she leads the reader to understand how things came about and why the nature of Bloomfield-Zeisler’s achievements are so remarkable in the light of her times. While not entirely unique, Bloomfield-Zeisler’s rise as a virtuoso of the highest ranks is still astounding, considering both her gender and her physical health as she suffered from various ailments including anemia, curvature of the spine, and violent headaches. She rose to build a career not only as one of America’s finest musicians, but as an international star in a firmament amid some of the greatest classical concert soloists of all time.

As a librarian and expert researcher, Macleod has left no stone unturned, and she gives the reader ample access to her primary source findings. An appendix in the book includes a “Salon Visitors’ Book,” which is an alphabetical listing of the visitors to Bloomfield-Zeisler’s home from 1904–1931. In addition to this remarkable “who’s who,” Macleod provides not just the names, but a helpful brief description of each person. The reader will instantly recognize luminaries such as composer Amy Beach; violinist Fritz Kreisler; Marian MacDowell, the founder of the MacDowell Colony; and Frank Kneisel, an early concertmaster of the Boston Symphony. Besides musicians, other visitors—such as philanthropist Julius Rosenwald and politician William Jennings Bryan—were famous in academia, economics, law, politics, activism, literature, science, or business. Another appendix provides a comprehensive listing of concert dates and locations. The last appendix is a list of Bloomfield-Zeisler’s extensive repertoire, giving a glimpse into her prodigious memory and ability to tackle the most difficult serious piano works as well as glittering showpieces and encores.

One of the defining characteristics about Bloomfield-Zeisler that emerges from this book is her stamina. Even for a person with modern conveniences, modes of transportation, and communication, her grueling concert schedule and caretaker activities with her children would prove difficult for anyone. Yet, with the support of her modern-styled husband, Sigmund Zeisler, she was able to carry on the activities of a full-time professional artist. Without his support, it is very unlikely that she would have been able to continue past the birth of her first child.
as most nineteenth-century women retired from concert careers when marriage or family came along. One of the main explanations in this book is the extent to which her husband’s support made her career possible—subsuming his own ambitions at the expense of his legal career.

Not only did Bloomfield-Zeisler overcome the pressures of family life, but the role of a woman as pianist in the first place. In the nineteenth century, most people did not believe women had the mental depth for musical interpretation or the physical stamina to perform on such a large and difficult instrument. Macleod points out that Bloomfield-Zeisler recorded on Welte-Mignon reproducing pianos, which could record pianistic nuances such as speed and dynamics. Belying any doubt as to her greatness, some of these recordings still survive. (You can still hear many examples on YouTube).

As with most American musicians at that time, Bloomfield-Zeisler had to study and prove herself in Europe before establishing an American following, as Americans relied on the imprimatur of European audiences to let them know who were the great musicians. She made a name for herself in Europe and then returned to the United States. Macleod digs down into the musical world, giving historical and sociological background and comparing Bloomfield-Zeisler’s performances with those of other musicians—specifically, two of the most famous piano soloists of the day, Anton Rubenstein and Ignace Paderewski—and reports that Bloomfield-Zeisler compared quite favorably.

Bloomfield-Zeisler was a perfectionist who had difficulty enjoying her successes. Her temperament often involved huge letdowns after concerts, and she experienced many trials and setbacks that went along with her stardom. However, she was friendly with many artists, such as Bertha Kalich, and her guest book shows no lack of interaction with other musicians of every rank. The very existence of her salon evokes a strong identification with upper-crust European intellectual Jewish women who were some of the prominent sponsors of musical salons.

In addition to the problems facing women musicians, Macleod explores whether Bloomfield-Zeisler’s Jewishness was an impediment. In visiting her career, the author notes that German Jews in the earlier part of the nineteenth century did not suffer the same sorts of antisemitism that would follow after the influx of Eastern European Ashkenazi Jews.
at the end of the century. One strange feature of this chapter, however, is the comparison of Bloomfield-Zeisler to Sarah Bernhardt. While Bernhardt’s is a name still famous today, the two had little in common. Bernhardt lived in France, was an actress as well as singer, and led an entirely different, flamboyant lifestyle than Bloomfield-Zeisler’s comfortable Chicago-based home life. (There are probably better choices for a comparison with Bernhardt. Bertha Kalich, a star of the Yiddish theater, may have been a closer parallel as a stage actress and singer to Bernhardt’s career.) One can hardly fault Macleod for an inexact comparison, however, because it is difficult to draw comparisons with Bloomfield-Zeisler. Her stature at the top of the serious musical concert world was unique. However, Julie Rosewald, while not as well known today as Bernhardt, was a German-Jewish American musician and would probably have been a better comparison. Rosewald came from a musical family of cantors and classical musicians. She was also a bit rebellious and fashioned herself as a “new woman,” balancing family and a stage career with an opera company that traveled throughout America. In Rosewald’s case, her husband, also a musician, supported her career and traveled with her. Both women were fabulously successful in nineteenth-century America and experienced similar reactions to their German cultural backgrounds and Jewish religious affiliation.

Macleod provides notes, an extensive bibliography, and an index to round out the academic and useful features of the book. Tellingly, her notes reveal that she did not rely heavily on her own original chapter about Bloomfield-Zeisler from her first book, but returned to the original primary sources to glean again the information and flesh it out for this biography. She is nothing if not thorough. The book is written in an informative, descriptive style and is not too academically dry or needlessly wordy. Macleod provides careful context for each of the main issues, giving background to aspects of nineteenth-century life—from standard concert repertoire to views on women’s health to travel and mobility. This all gently leads the reader to a greater holistic understanding of this woman’s life and times, which are so different from today. For this reason, this book is very instructive to students in learning about nineteenth-century ways, attitudes, and lifestyles, as well as the prominence and musical stardom of an American Jewish woman.
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Writing a biography is a tricky task. Should an author focus on the details of one person’s life, making the case for his or her significance? Or should an author use one person’s life as a window into the historical circumstances and context that shaped it? These are not mutually exclusive approaches, of course, and each has its own set of advantages and disadvantages. In *Gertrude Weil: Jewish Progressive in the New South*, Leonard Rogoff attempts to do both, with mixed results. Weil was by all accounts an exceptional woman. As an expert on the Jews of North Carolina, Rogoff is well placed to situate her in her local history, and his reconstruction of her life is greatly aided by the immense archival record she left behind. In this carefully researched, painstaking account of her life of achievement, he paints a vivid picture of her long decades of social welfare activism. However, while Rogoff never flinches from Weil’s self-admitted prejudices and blind spots—which, to be fair, clearly shifted over her long life—he is also never quite able to capture the inner woman in a way that can speak broadly to the Southern Jewish experience. As is often the case with public figures who are the subjects of biographies, she remains something of a cipher.

Gertrude Weil (1879–1971) grew up in Goldsboro, North Carolina, the daughter of a German-born father and American-born mother, both of whom had large, close families. One of the great strengths of the book is Rogoff’s illumination of the kin and business networks that connected
Jewish communities and families during the post-Civil-War era and beyond. For the Weils and many other members of the Goldsboro Jewish community, Baltimore served as a sort of hub where business deals could be transacted, family relationships could be reinforced, and Jewish culture and religiosity could be bolstered. Weil spent a few years at the Horace Mann School in New York and then attended Smith College. She also traveled frequently throughout her long life. However, she spent most of her nearly hundred years in North Carolina. Not all American Jewish history was centered in New York, and Rogoff successfully argues that American Jewish history needs to take into account figures like Weil, who were connected to larger currents in American, Jewish, and women’s history but whose field of operation was primarily local. Rogoff’s immersion in the history of Southern Jewry is one of the great strengths of the book.

Like many of her contemporaneous college-educated women who chose lives of service over marriage, Weil was active in multiple social movements: suffrage, birth control, peace, education, labor, and welfare, to name only a few. She helped establish the North Carolina Association of Jewish Women and—somewhat unusually, considering her background—was a committed Zionist with personal ties to Henrietta Szold and Hadassah. Like her mother Mina Rosenthal Weil, a tremendous influence on her life, she gave both time and money to a seemingly endless number of causes, focusing especially on Jewish and women’s issues. The national leaders of women’s movements such as suffrage and birth control considered her a steadfast ally and consulted her on North Carolina politics. In a series of thematically organized chapters, Rogoff traces the many ways in which Weil worked diligently to make the world around her a better place. Yet as he points out and Weil herself admitted, she was very much a product of Southern society and came relatively late in life to civil rights and efforts to improve race relations. She and her mother, like many progressive activists during the early twentieth century, supported eugenics, though not the enforced sterilization programs for which North Carolina became notorious. These are complicated issues for any biographer, who must walk a fine line between providing context for his subject’s blind spots and excusing them. To his credit, Rogoff certainly does not ignore them, but neither does he spend much time discussing them, in part because the bulk of the book focuses on
the first half of Weil’s long life, before she apparently began to reassess some of her own prejudices.

Gertrude Weil was one of the most well-known Jewish women of her day and has received some previous attention in scholarship on American Jewish women’s activism and as one of the Jewish Women’s Archive’s “Women of Valor” (see www.jwa.org/womenofvalor). Rogoff makes a strong argument that she should be even better known by those interested in American Jewish history and American women’s history. Though he is never quite able to bring her personality to life, her impressive record of achievement solidifies that claim and makes this smoothly written biography an important contribution to the field.

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In Louis D. Brandeis: American Prophet, Jeffrey Rosen examines the philosophy of Louis Dembitz Brandeis (1856–1941), the first Jewish justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and a towering champion of the common man. Rosen notes in his introduction that the book is not a comprehensive biography but rather an introduction to “what Brandeis thought and why he matters today” (8). Part of the “Jewish Lives” series, the book is intended for a general readership, but legal scholars will find the work beneficial as well. In four skillfully written chapters, Rosen argues that Brandeis espoused a judicial sensibility rooted in a distinct ethical and, arguably, prophetic worldview that is more relevant in today’s political and economic climate than ever before. In developing this argument, Rosen makes ample use of personal correspondences,
essays, and numerous court opinions, as well as a wealth of secondary literature. In so doing, he avoids the pitfall of rendering the subject of his biography a monolithic historical figure. Through these materials we see a mind in constant development, continually refining ideas of justice, self-improvement, and, eventually, Zionism.

Born in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1856 into a community of farmers and small-business owners, Brandeis learned from a young age the value of Jeffersonian agrarian democracy. Later in life, as an attorney and then Supreme Court justice, he extended democratic principles to encompass the industrial realm, fighting for workers’ rights and challenging the corruption of big corporations. Dubbed the “People’s Attorney,” Brandeis represented the interests of family businesses against the monopolies of the Gilded Age. He also pushed for transparency in business practices, famously opining, “if the broad light of day could be let in upon men’s actions, it would purify them as the sun disinfects” (42).

At the core of Brandeis’ judicial philosophy was “a determination to translate the text of the Constitution and the values of the framers into concepts and rulings that were demanded by an era of social and technological change” (100). Few cases better exemplify this philosophy than *Olmstead v. United States* (1928). In his dissenting opinion, Brandeis, insisting that the evidence obtained by government wiretapping should have been suppressed, wrote, “[t]he greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning but without understanding.” Brandeis concludes his opinion in what Rosen terms “full prophetic mode,” giving “a stern warning about the dangers of allowing the state to profit by its own ethical violations” (144).

That these principles have application today is perhaps more indicative of their practicality rather than any prophetic quality. Nonetheless, Rosen persuasively argues that Brandeis was a far-seeing progressive, whose opinions are still relevant and instructive in our modern day. In addition to comparing Brandeis to a prophet, Rosen frequently likens him to Thomas Jefferson, considering his adherence to small-scale democracy to be a continuation of Jefferson’s legacy. He contends that Brandeis should be recognized as a figure equally as important in shaping American democracy as Jefferson and, in fact, refers to him on occasion as the “Jewish Jefferson.”
Rosen devotes the last chapter to Brandeis’s return to his Jewish roots and his relationship with Zionism. Positive experiences later in life, first with Eastern European Jews during a labor strike, and then with Zionist agriculturalist Aaron Aaronsohn, prompted Brandeis to fully embrace his Jewish heritage and, ultimately, to adopt Zionism. According to Rosen, Brandeis was an individualist and a communitarian who believed “American Jews could not develop an individual identity without also cultivating and participating in a group identity” (182). Brandeis’s interest in science-based farming and small-scale democracy, therefore, led him to view the kibbutzim as the ideal environment for improving both the individual and the community.

Rosen’s book contains at least one factual error. On page 29 the author writes that in his youth Adolph Brandeis (b. 1822), the father of Louis Brandeis, faced antisemitic laws in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Surely the author meant to reference the Austrian Empire, because the Austro-Hungarian Empire was not established until 1867, well after the Brandeis family had moved to America (1848). Such an error, however, is relatively minor and does not detract from the overall quality of Rosen’s study, which is a welcome and thoughtful addition to the literature on Brandeis and the American experience.

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The Canadian Jewish Studies “coming out” party was to be 16 December 2007. The Association for Jewish Studies (AJS) had held its annual Hanukkah-time conference in the United States every year of its
existence. This time the conference, held in Toronto, would be different from all other AJS conferences. And so it was. A huge blizzard led to hundreds of flight cancelations. Entire panels were decimated. The AJS has not considered returning the conference to Canada since.

Scholars of Canadian Jewry, however, have not given up hope for making a significant impact on the broader world of Jewish studies. Case in point: the new volume, *Neither in Dark Speeches Nor in Similitudes: Reflections and Refractions Between Canadian and American Jews*, edited by Barry L. Stiefel and Hernan Tesler-Mabé and published in Canada by Wilfrid Laurier University Press. Their goal, per the introduction, is to integrate Canadian and American Jewish studies by imagining a transnational North American Jewish studies. This would focus on comparative analyses of Jewish people, ideas, and phenomena in both countries, as well as stories that transcend national boundaries and live on the metaphorical “borderlands” (xii)—if not the actual border—of Canada and the United States.

Jonathan D. Sarna offers good advice in the book’s opening chapter, a revision of his 1981 article on “The Value of Canadian Jewish History to the American Jewish Historian, and Vice Versa.” He identifies ten categories with which to compare the Canadian and American Jewish communities and experiences, including leadership, religion and Zionism, subethnic composition, and intermarriage. Following Sarna’s historiographical intervention, Susan Landau provides a concise summary of Canadian Jewish history prior to Confederation in 1867 (when Canada achieved its first major step toward independence from Britain), which is especially helpful to Americans unfamiliar with the field.


It is the more transnational articles, however, that really let the volume shine. While Lillooet Nordlinger McDonnell compares Jewish
life in the Canadian and American Pacific Northwest, she recounts the colorful career of Frank Sylvester, the English-born Jewish merchant who made his way from New York to San Francisco to Victoria, B.C., in the mid-nineteenth century. Tesler-Mabé’s interesting chapter, on German Jewish classical music conductor Heinz Unger, is transnational, but not really with the United States. Unger fled Nazi Germany for England in the 1930s and then settled in Toronto after the war. Unger’s passion for the music of Gustav Mahler, an Austrian-born Jew who converted to Catholicism to escape antisemitism, transcended national boundaries.

In a more “Judaic” contribution, Zev Eleff analyzes the nineteenth-century collaboration between two Sephardic clergymen, Jacques Judah Lyons of New York’s Shearith Israel and Abraham de Sola of Montreal’s Spanish and Portuguese congregation. The two joined forces to produce, in 1854, the *Jewish Calendar for Fifty Years*. Both “staunchly Orthodox” (98), they accepted the “open secret” (99) that most Sephardic Jews in North America were religiously lax outside of synagogue, despite insisting on traditional prayer service inside of it. The calendar bolstered this “Synagogue Judaism” (100), providing a schedule for synagogue attendance. “Fidelity to the traditional synagogue” became “the creed of the Portuguese Jews of North America” (106) even as they flouted *halakhah* in their everyday lives. Religiously, Sephardic Jews in Canada and the United States had more in common with each other than with their Ashkenazi neighbors.

Also on the subject of Judaism, Ira Robinson offers a fascinating article on a Quebec synagogue’s struggle to find a rabbi. By the mid-twentieth century, most rabbis in North America were Americans; of those who were Canadian, the majority received ordination in the United States. More remote Canadian congregations had trouble hiring clergy, as American rabbis could feel isolated in smaller Canadian cities. To ameliorate this, Bais Israel-Oheb Sholom, in Quebec City, developed a relationship with the Rabbi Isaac Elhanan Theological Seminary, the Orthodox rabbinical school of Yeshiva University in New York. Utilizing correspondence between Yeshiva-trained rabbis in Quebec and their seminary teachers in New York City, Robinson tells a Canadian Jewish story that contains a transnational American element.
Robinson’s article and the success of this volume prompt a word of caution. Hopefully, more scholarship of the “borderlands” of the Canadian and American Jewish communities will be produced, employing this interesting transnational North American lens. Nonetheless, scholars of Canadian Jewry should continue telling Jewish stories that focus primarily or even exclusively on Canada. Otherwise, nobody else will, and Canadian Jewish Studies will be left out in the cold.


On 31 December 1932, New York State Court of Appeals Justice Irving Lehman administered the oath of office to New York’s newly elected governor: his brother, Herbert H. Lehman, the first Jewish governor of New York. As Duane Tananbaum notes in his new political biography of Herbert Lehman, Lehman took great pride in the fact that his older brother Irving, one of New York’s most distinguished jurists, had sworn him into office to succeed his friend Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had just been elected president of the United States. Tananbaum’s meticulously researched and massive (959 pages) volume is the first major biography of Herbert Lehman since Columbia University historian Allan Nevins’s authorized biography, *Herbert H. Lehman and His Era*, published shortly after Lehman’s death in 1963.

Herbert Lehman—scion of the legendary Lehman investment banking family and the family member after whom New York City’s Lehman College was named—was one of the most distinguished and influential Jewish politicians of the twentieth century. One of only two Jews in American history to serve as both a governor and U.S. senator—Abraham Ribicoff was the other—Lehman served as lieutenant governor.
of New York during Roosevelt’s years as governor (1929–1933), as
governor of New York from 1933 to 1943, and as U.S. senator from
the Empire State from 1949 to 1957. He is, to date, the only Jewish
politician to serve four terms as governor of any state, and he has the
distinction of winning eight New York State electoral victories, a po‑
litical record that has yet to be equaled. From 1940 to 1943, while he
controlled the executive branch of New York’s state government, his
brother Irving controlled New York’s judiciary, serving as the influential
chief judge of the New York State Court of Appeals. This was the only
time in New York history that two brothers headed the executive and
judicial branches of the state government.

During his decade as New York’s governor, as Tananbaum docu‑
ments in much detail, he supported FDR’s liberal New Deal policies
and presided over a state government known as the “Little New Deal.”
In December 1943, Lehman resigned the governorship less than a
month before the end of his fourth term to serve as director general of
the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, where
he would administer humanitarian relief for the starving people of
Europe and Asia during and after World War II. Despite his already‑
distinguished public career, Lehman’s greatest ambition was to serve
in the United States Senate, and in 1949, at the age of 71, he defeated
President Eisenhower’s future secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, in
a historic and closely watched New York U.S. Senate election, which
Tananbaum discusses in much detail.

Born in 1878, the youngest of the eight children of Mayer and
Babette Lehman, both immigrants from Bavaria, Herbert grew up in a
world of wealth and privilege. After graduating from Williams College
and working for a textile manufacturer for several years, in 1908 he
entered the family’s investment banking firm, Lehman Brothers, where
he worked until his election as lieutenant governor of New York in
1928. At the beginning of World War I, he took a leave from Lehman
Brothers to work in the Navy Department, where he first met and
became friends with the department’s assistant secretary, Franklin D.
Roosevelt. Following the war, Lehman became active in New York
Democratic politics, serving as Al Smith’s presidential campaign finance
chairman in 1928. Later that year, when FDR was elected governor of
New York, Lehman was on the ticket as lieutenant governor. Historically, the lieutenant governor of New York had been mostly a figurehead, but Roosevelt made Lehman an important member of his administration, serving often as acting governor when FDR was away from Albany in Warm Springs, Georgia, recuperating from his crippling bout with polio.

One of the most liberal Democrats in the Senate during the 1950s, “a liberal icon, passionate in his devotion to civil rights, civil liberties and other liberal causes,” Lehman was an outspoken and vocal critic of Joseph McCarthy and a critic of other Senate Democrats, including John F. Kennedy, for their reticence to speak out against McCarthy. As Tananbaum reminds us, Lehman was one of the first senators to challenge McCarthy’s unverified allegations about the extent and threat of Communist infiltration within the U.S. government and one of the few members of Congress to oppose the Internal Security Act of 1950, a controversial piece of anti-Communist legislation introduced by Patrick McCarran, the conservative Democratic chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee. McCarran, a man known for his antisemitism who “had taken an instant disliking to Lehman because he was Jewish,” attacked Lehman bitterly on the floor of the Senate for allegedly protecting Communists.

Tananbaum’s discussion of Lehman’s evolving relationship with Kennedy during the 1950s offers much insight into Kennedy’s effort to cultivate the political support of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party—of which Lehman by then was very much an icon—in his pursuit of the Democratic Party’s presidential nomination in 1960. Lehman and other Senate liberals had been dismayed by Kennedy’s failure to condemn McCarthy in the early 1950s. With the publication of Kennedy’s Pulitzer-Prize-winning *Profiles in Courage*, the stark contrast between the courageous acts by U.S. senators described in the book and Kennedy’s own failure to condemn McCarthy, as Lehman had done, led Eleanor Roosevelt and others to quip that Kennedy needed to “show a little less profile and a little more courage.” As Tananbaum points out, throughout much of their shared tenure in the Senate, Lehman and Kennedy “differed over how forcefully to pursue civil rights for African Americans,” but they did share a commitment to immigration reform, agreeing, as Lehman put it, that America’s immigration and naturalization laws
were “a national and world scandal.” Lehman continued to take more liberal positions in the Senate than did Kennedy, whose positions on civil rights in particular were often dictated almost entirely by political expediency. Thus, when Lehman and Paul Douglas tried to force action on civil rights in 1956, “they received no help from Kennedy, who did not want to alienate the South on the eve of the Democratic National Convention at which he hoped to be nominated for the vice presidency.”

The key question looming over their future relationship, notes Tananbaum, “was whether Lehman considered Kennedy a strong, experienced liberal to support him for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1960.” While Lehman and many like-minded liberals agreed that Kennedy certainly had the charm and good looks—the profile—to run for president, concludes Tanenbaum, “they wondered whether he had the courage to provide the leadership the nation needed on civil rights and other issues confronting the American people.”

Tananbaum also analyzes Lehman’s evolving views about Zionism and Israel: Like so many other German-Jewish leaders of his generation, Lehman remained a staunch non-Zionist, at first opposing the creation of a Jewish state, believing “that Palestine should be available as a haven to Jews facing persecution anywhere in the world … but he feared that the establishment of a Jewish state would raise questions concerning the loyalty of American Jews to the United States.” By 1948, however, Lehman had become convinced that the only way to ensure a haven for Jewish refugees from Europe was the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, and he “played an important but often overlooked role” in President Truman’s decision to recognize the new state of Israel—a role which Tananbaum recounts in persuasive detail. Lehman remained a strong supporter of Israel throughout his years in the U.S. Senate, first visiting Israel with his wife Edith in 1949. When they returned to Israel in 1959, he visited Kfar Lehman, the small Israeli town in the Western Galilee that had been named for him.

Tananbaum’s book is a major contribution to American political history and biography that, at the same time, regrettably offers little insight into, or analysis of, Lehman’s personal life or the rarefied German-Jewish world in which he and his family played a prominent leadership and philanthropic role. Indeed, the major weakness of Tananbaum’s book is
that it concentrates almost entirely on Lehman’s thirty-five-year political career, focusing primarily on his interactions with major figures in his political life, such as Al Smith, Franklin Roosevelt, James Farley, Harry Truman, Lyndon Johnson, and his political rivalries with (among others) Thomas Dewey, John Foster Dulles, New York City Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, Joseph McCarthy, and the Republican leaders of the New York State Legislature. One wishes that Tananbaum had included some of the memorable biographical anecdotes found in the Nevins biography and in the more recent family history *Lots of Lehmans*, edited by Kenneth Libo; these would have illuminated aspects of Lehman’s family relationships and personal life. Throughout his life, for example, as Nevins has recounted, Lehman remained very close to his brother Irving and, especially during his years as lieutenant governor and governor, depended greatly on his brother’s advice and unflagging companionship, taking great comfort in Irving’s long sojourns in Albany. Tananbaum does not discuss their relationship in any detail.

Tananbaum’s references to Lehman’s three children, although few, are often poignant and moving. On the night of his election as New York’s lieutenant governor in 1928, for example, Lehman and Edith went to bed assuming he had lost, leaving a note on their bedroom door instructing their children: “Don’t wake us. Daddy has been beaten, but he doesn’t feel badly.” Lehman woke up the next morning to the news that he had won. Missing from the book, however, is any indication whether he and his family lived a Jewishly observant life. Nowhere is there a mention of, for example, whether Herbert and Edith celebrated Rosh Hashanah, Passover, or other Jewish holidays with their children or ever attended Sabbath services at New York City’s Temple Emanu-El, where Irving, the most religious member of the Lehman family, was the longtime president. Surprisingly, also, there is no discussion of Irving and Herbert’s close personal friendship with Benjamin Cardozo, who preceded Irving as Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals before his appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1932. Tananbaum fails to even mention that Irving and Cardozo were each other’s closest friend and that Cardozo was also a friend and sometime adviser of Herbert and served with him on the Board of Governors of the American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Welfare
Board. (Tananbaum does discuss that Herbert had hoped that FDR might appoint Irving to a vacant seat on the Supreme Court.) Irving’s wife Sissie, the daughter of the Macy’s department store president and preeminent Jewish philanthropist Nathan Straus, fails to make it into the book, as do other members of New York’s wealthy “Our Crowd” German-Jewish elite, such as the Strauses, Lewisohns, and Loebs, to whom Lehman was related.

While it will undoubtedly remain the authoritative political biography of Lehman for decades to come, Tananbaum devotes less attention than did Nevins to the specifically Jewish history, identity, and involvements of Lehman and his family, and to Herbert and Irving Lehman and their wives’ active role in Jewish philanthropy and communal affairs. In discussing that his biography of Lehman was the first published since Nevins’s in 1963, Tananbaum argues that “it seemed redundant to focus on Lehman’s personal and family life or the German-Jewish milieu from which Lehman came.” His decision not to, for the student of American Jewish history at least, is a weakness of his otherwise notable book.

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